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ANALYSIS

US-S. Korean alliance tested by N. Korea's saber-rattling

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea on Sunday stepped up its criticism of U.S.-South Korean military exercises, warning the drills will have “disastrous consequences” despite allied efforts to scale them back.

It was the latest in a surge of saber-rattling and missile tests as the communist state sets the stage for what is likely to be another tough round of talks with the U.S. over its nuclear weapons program.

The North has raised the stakes by conducting six weapons tests in less than a month, which experts say may be short-range but could pose a new threat to U.S. military bases and evade defenses in the South.

Despite the rhetoric, Pyongyang has signaled it might return to the negotiating table after joint exercises due to end Tuesday. Experts say it is likely to come with a higher price and hopes of driving a wedge in the long-standing U.S.-South Korean alliance.

SEE ALLIANCE ON PAGE 5



RAFIQ MAQBOO/AP

Afghan soldiers inspect the damaged Dubai City wedding hall Sunday after an explosion in Kabul, Afghanistan. A suicide-bomb blast ripped through a wedding party on a busy Saturday night. It was the deadliest attack in the Afghan capital this year.

ISIS claims bombing

Afghans question prospect of peace after blast kills 63 at wedding party

By RAHIM FAIEZ AND CARA ANNA
Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — The suicide bomber stood in the middle of the dancing, clapping crowd as hundreds of Afghan children and adults celebrated a wedding in a joyous release from Kabul's strain of war. Then, in a flash, he detonated his explosives-filled vest, killing dozens — and Afghanistan grieved again.

The local Islamic State affiliate claimed

responsibility for the deadliest attack in the capital this year, with 63 killed and 182 wounded, while outraged Afghans questioned just how safe they will be under an approaching deal between the U.S. and the Taliban to end America's longest war.

Stunned families buried the dead, some digging with their bare hands. One wounded survivor, Mohammad Aslim, wore his bloodied clothes the day after the blast late Saturday. He and his friends already had buried 16 bodies, among them several close

relatives, including a 7-year-old boy.

Aslim looked exhausted and said he was waiting to bury more. Nearby, a man named Amanullah, who lost his 14-year-old son, said in anguish that the explosion had mangled the boy's face so badly he could no longer recognize it.

“I wish I could find the pieces of my son's body and put them as one piece into the grave,” he cried.

SEE BOMBING ON PAGE 6



AP

This photo provided by the North Korean government shows a test-firing of an unspecified new weapon at an undisclosed location in North Korea.

EUROPE

US soldier injured in car crash in Germany

By MARCUS KLOECKNER
AND MARTIN EGNASH
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Four people, including an Army soldier and a U.S. civilian, were seriously injured in a car crash in Bavaria this week, the Army said Friday.

The soldier involved in the accident Thursday, on a road between the Army's Rose Barracks in Vilseck and the German town of Freihung, is part of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, based near where the accident occurred, Army spokeswoman Lacey Justinger said.

All four people in both vehicles sustained serious but not life-threatening injuries, German police officials said.

The accident happened when a couple in their 60s abruptly slowed their Volkswagen Touran to make a turn, without using a turn signal, police said. Just as the VW began to turn, a Volvo driven by a 21-year-old female American civilian with the 22-year-old male soldier in the passenger seat tried to pass the car, police said.

"The driver of the Volvo immediately slammed on the brakes but was unable to avoid a crash," said German police officer Alexander Striegel, from the Auerbach precinct.

Preliminary investigations indicated that the Volvo was traveling at high enough speed when it smashed into the back of the VW to force the Touran to skid off the road. The VW rolled over several times before coming to a stop 110 yards away, Striegel said.

Despite their injuries, the two



Juergen Masching

Four people, including a soldier and U.S. civilian, were seriously injured in a car crash on the road between Vilseck and Freihung on Thursday.

Americans were able to get out of their car without help but the couple in the VW had to be cut out of their vehicle.

The couple in the VW was airlifted to a hospital by two helicopters that responded to the scene.

U.S. military police from Rose Barracks in Vilseck assisted in

the response along with firefighters from Grafenwoehr, Vilseck, Schlicht, Freihung and Kaltebrunn.

The road, "a long, straight street that leads through the forest," was shut down for several hours, Striegel said.

"Accidents happen sometimes

on this road but it is not an accident hotspot," he said.

Under German rules, drivers must pay attention to traffic behind them, particularly when turning or slowing down.

They should also "look over their shoulder" to check the car's blind spot, Striegel said.

"The thoughts and prayers of the combined U.S. military community in Bavaria go out to those injured in this incident," Justinger said.

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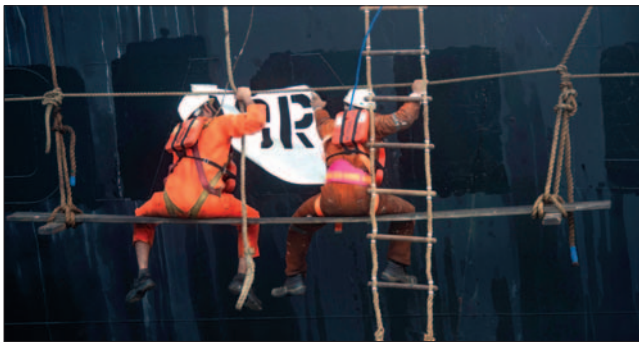
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MILITARY



MARCOS MORENO/AP

Crewmembers of the Grace 1 supertanker remove the name of the ship in the British territory of Gibraltar on Saturday.

Gibraltar rejects US pressure not to release Iranian tanker

By ARITZ PARRA
Associated Press

MADRID — Authorities in Gibraltar on Sunday rejected the United States' latest request not to release a seized Iranian supertanker, clearing the way for the vessel to set sail after being detained last month for allegedly attempting to breach European Union sanctions on Syria.

The ship was expected to leave Sunday night, according to a statement on Twitter by Hamid Baedinejad, Iran's ambassador to Britain.

The tanker's release comes amid a growing confrontation between Iran and the West after President Donald Trump pulled Washington out of Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers over a year ago.

Shortly after the tanker's detention in early July near Gibraltar — a British overseas territory — Iran seized the British-flagged

oil tanker Stena Impero, which remains held by the Islamic Republic. Analysts had said the Iranian ship's release by Gibraltar could see the Stena Impero go free.

Gibraltar's government said Sunday it was allowing the Iranian tanker's release because "the EU sanctions regime against Iran — which is applicable in Gibraltar — is much narrower than that applicable in the U.S."

In a last-ditch effort to stop the release, the U.S. unsealed a warrant Friday to seize the vessel and its cargo of 2.1 million barrels of light crude oil, citing violations of U.S. sanctions as well as money laundering and terrorism statutes.

U.S. officials told reporters that the oil aboard the ship was worth some \$130 million and that it was destined for a designated terrorism organization to conduct more terrorism.

The unsealed court documents argued that Iran's Islamic Revolu-

tionary Guard Corps are the ship's true owners through a network of front companies.

Authorities in Gibraltar said Sunday that, unlike in the U.S., Iran's Revolutionary Guard is not designated a terrorist organization under EU, U.K. or Gibraltar law.

The Iranian ship was detained while sailing under a Panamanian flag with the name Grace 1. As of Sunday, it had been renamed the Adrian Darya 1 and had hoisted an Iranian flag. Workers were seen painting the new name on the side of the ship Saturday.

Iran has not disclosed the Adrian Darya 1's intended destination and has denied it was ever sailing for Syria.

The chief minister of Gibraltar, Fabian Picardo, said he had been assured in writing by the Iranian government that the tanker wouldn't unload its cargo in Syria.

Bahrain signs deal to buy US missile defense system

By JOSHUA KARSTEN
Stars and Stripes

MANAMA, Bahrain — Bahrain has signed an agreement to purchase the Patriot air and missile defense system, putting it in line with other Persian Gulf nations partnered with the U.S. amid ongoing tensions in the region with Iran.

Bahrain will purchase the system from the U.S. Army, defense contractor Raytheon said in a statement last week.

The purchase agreement allows the U.S. to negotiate with Raytheon for an undisclosed number of systems and missiles.

However, Bahrain had its request approved by the State Department in May to purchase the Patriot system with 96 missiles, two radar systems, two control stations with nine launchers and all associated equipment and services, according to a Defense Security Cooperation Agency statement in May.

The deal was worth an estimated \$2.5 billion and intended to support the "foreign policy and national security" of the United States, the May statement said.

Raytheon said Bahrain is the 17th nation to purchase the Patriot system, along with Persian Gulf nations including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

Bahrain, a small island kingdom connected by a bridge to Saudi Arabia, is the headquarters of the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet. Britain also bases its naval forces in the country.

Meanwhile, Iranian officials

last week aimed threatening rhetoric at the United States following months of low-level conflict in the Persian Gulf.

The commander of Iran's navy, Rear Adm. Hossein Khanzadi, called on enemies to leave the region immediately or face a humiliating withdrawal, Iran's Tasnim News reported.

Iran has stopped or attempted to detain international shipping transiting the Persian Gulf in recent months, prompting the U.S. to announce plans for a coalition of nations to escort commercial ships through the waterway.

The most recent tensions began in May, when the U.S. sent bombers and hastened the arrival of a Navy carrier group following intelligence reports that indicated threats from Iran or its proxies on U.S. forces.

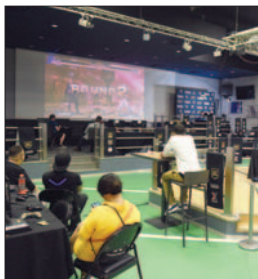
The exact threats were not specified. However, U.S. officials said in May that they suspected increased rocket attacks in Iraq near U.S. bases, and the embassy may have been the work of Iranian-backed militias. Iran denied that.

In July, the USS Boxer downed an Iranian drone that the U.S. said threatened the ship over international waters in the Strait of Hormuz, though Iran denied that it lost any aircraft. The previous month, Iran shot down a U.S. Global Hawk that it said flew into its airspace. The U.S. said the drone was well within international airspace.

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Soldiers show off their street-fighting skills in esports arena

By MARTIN EGNASH
Stars and Stripes



MARTIN EGNASH/Stars and Stripes

People compete at the Street Fighter V tournament at Vilseck, Germany, on Saturday.

VILSECK, Germany — The epic cry of "Hadouken!" could be heard across the loudspeakers Saturday as a blue fireball launched across the big screen into an almost-defeated Chun-Li to the roaring applause of dozens of soldiers competing in a Street Fighter V tournament.

The tournament, taking place at 12 Army and National Guard locations, allows soldiers to compete in an esports arena atmosphere and play as their favorite Street Fighter characters in an attempt to win a free trip to San Diego to compete in the worldwide tournament at Twitchcon.

Put on by the Army's Morale, Welfare and Recreation program, the event is part of a larger Army movement to embrace electronic sports for morale-building.

"The Army is at the forefront of [esports]," said Refugio Orozco, the MWR sponsorship coordinator. "We're not sitting

back on the sidelines, getting in on it late."

This is the second year the Army has partnered with Twitch, but this year the Army tournament has significantly expanded to include a pro-level atmosphere and competition at four new locations.

The move to embrace esports is due to its popularity among soldiers, Orozco said.

The events are livestreamed on Twitch's website and have received millions of views worldwide.

This gives competitors a chance to watch their comrades' games around the world, as well as a way for their friends and families back home to be part of the experience.

The comment section of the livestream was filled with encouraging messages from some of the soldiers' families, some located thousands of miles away from where the troops are stationed.

In addition to the 12 contest winners going to Twitchcon, there will be four "blind draws," allowing two active-duty soldiers and two guardsmen who did not

get the opportunity to compete to play at the tournament.

"We can't make it to every location, so the blind draw gives a chance for those soldiers who we didn't get to go see compete at the higher levels," Orozco said. "We receive a lot of feedback from soldiers, and it shows that esports is very relevant to them."

Esports has been increasing in popularity worldwide in the past few years.

Just five years ago, when some major businesses and sports organizations would hear about esports, executives would scratch their heads and look on with blank stares, said Nathan Lindberg, the senior director of global sponsorships at Twitch.

"But recently, esports has taken the mantle of the hot thing in gaming," Lindberg said. "We're happy to have a partner like the U.S. Army, where so many individuals are passionate about it."

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MILITARY

Services mark Operation Dragoon anniversary

850 troops died in WWII battle that followed Normandy

By MICHAEL ABRAMS
Stars and Stripes

DRAGUIGNAN, France — A ceremony at Rhone American Cemetery on Friday remembered those who fought in Operation Dragoon, the Allied invasion of southern France 75 years ago.

Looking across the graves of more than 850 fallen troops, French and American dignitaries spoke of sacrifice and bravery in an operation that is often overlooked in the annals of World War II.

Simon Hankinson, the U.S. Consul General in Marseille, noted that when he was researching the battle, he found just three books in English on it, but hundreds on the Normandy invasion.

Operation Dragoon was planned to happen simultaneously with the Normandy invasion, but a shortage of resources — mainly ships — led to the operation being canceled.

With Normandy a success and a need for more ports to bring men and equipment to the Continent, the plan was revived with the objective of capturing the ports of Toulon and Marseille, trapping the German army in France and linking up with Allied armies advancing in the north.

It was launched Aug. 15, 1944, and within a month, on Sept. 12, troops advancing north from the Cote d'Azur met up with troops from the Normandy invasion near Dijon. Most of France was free.

But the success came at a cost. In his speech, Rear Adm. Matthew Zirkle said that the free-



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

U.S. Army soldiers stand in formation during the ceremony Friday marking the 75th anniversary of Operation Dragoon at Rhone American Cemetery in Draguignan, France.

dom the U.S. and Europe enjoy today was “earned by the blood and sacrifice of those interred in these hallowed grounds, and we cannot and will not forget their sacrifice.”

The day before the ceremony, Allan Johnson, 95, walked through the cemetery, stopping at a few graves to honor members of his unit. One was that of Pvt. Henry Wikins, a Jewish soldier whose body, when recovered, showed signs of being tortured by the Nazis.

As a young private, Johnson, an engineer with the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team, jumped into France in the early hours of Aug. 15. His unit was supposed to land in a triangle made up of the towns of Le Muy,

La Motte and Les Arcs, but came down near Callian, nearly 15 miles off the mark.

“We didn’t know where we were,” Johnson said, recalling the day 75 years ago. “First people we saw were young girls who were leaning against the wall, giggling.”

Eventually his unit gathered and got going.

Families and friends of others who fell during the operation attended the ceremony. Among them was Steven Hill, a college history teacher in Raleigh, N.C. He came to honor his uncle, Tech. 4 Zeb Murphy Banks, an Army tanker who was killed Aug. 28, 1944, when his tank hit a mine.

Hill had visited once before, 20 years ago with his father. When

he saw the coverage of the D-Day anniversary in June he decided to come to the ceremony. “It’s the



Steven Hill poses next to the grave of his uncle, Tech. 4 Zeb Murphy Banks, at Rhone American Cemetery in Draguignan, France, Thursday. Banks was an Army tanker who was killed Aug. 28, 1944, when his tank hit a mine.

75th anniversary, so I’ve got to do this,” he said before visiting his uncle’s grave.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Jared Brannon, a saxophonist with the U.S. Naval Forces Europe Band from Naples, Italy, thought it was the most touching ceremony he has attended.

“To be surrounded by people who gave their lives was moving,” he said. “And being near the French Resistance fighters, who fought the oppression of the Nazis, was inspiring.”

Following the speeches there was a wreath-laying, the playing of taps, a rifle salute, a flyover of a Ramstein Air Base, Germany, C-130 Hercules aircraft and the playing of the national anthems before the U.S. Naval Forces Europe color guard retired the colors.

“It was an outstanding ceremony,” said Spc. John Cruz, a member of the firing detail from the U.S. Army’s 1st Inland Cargo Transfer Company in Kaiserslautern, Germany. “It was a great honor to be here.”

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Man suspected of stabbing killed by Andersen AFB police

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

An intruder who fled from police into Andersen Air Force Base in Guam Wednesday evening and stabbed a Defense Department civilian security forces member has died from gunshot wounds inflicted by security forces.

The unnamed man was shot while being apprehended at approximately 6:35 a.m. Thursday, Air Force officials said in two statements Thursday. He had reportedly stabbed an unnamed civilian guard attached to base security forces who was attempting to apprehend him, prompting the guard to open fire.

The intruder was pronounced dead at the scene at 7:52 a.m. while being treated by emergency medical personnel, the statements said. The Air Force has not released the name of either individual involved, nor the condition of the security forces member.

“While apprehending a suspect, our defenders were compelled to use lethal force for their own defense, resulting in the death of the suspect,” 36th Wing com-

“While apprehending a suspect, our defenders were compelled to use lethal force for their own defense, resulting in the death of the suspect.”

Air Force Brig. Gen. Gentry Boswell
36th Wing commander

mander Air Force Brig. Gen. Gentry Boswell said in the statements. “We value the importance of every life and are thankful for the courage our Defenders display in the safe conduct of their duties protecting our personnel and families.”

The incident began Wednesday evening when Guam Police were investigating a reported home invasion on Ypao Road in Tamuning, Guam’s Pacific Daily News reported, citing police sources. Officers leaving the scene spotted the suspect’s vehicle. A high-speed chase ensued.

The driver attempted to force his way through Andersen’s front gate at approximately 7:35 p.m. but crashed into emergency defensive barriers deployed by members

of the 36th Security Forces Squadron, the statements said. He then abandoned his vehicle and fled on foot into a jungle area on-base.

The base was locked down following the incident and Guam Police and security forces began searching for him, the statements said. The intruder made attempts to evade jungle patrols.

In the meantime, the “all clear” was issued sometime before 2 a.m. Thursday and normal base operations resumed, Air Force officials wrote on Facebook. The base’s main gate was closed again Thursday morning as the intruder’s arrest unfolded.

When the intruder was found, he “re-

sponded aggressively attacking the arresting officers and stabbed a Department of Defense civilian security forces member,” the statements said. The man was then shot by the officer in “self-defense.”

Earlier Air Force statements said the intruder was taken to a civilian hospital after the shooting.

Air Force officials declined to comment further Friday morning. Guam Police’s public information officer did not answer several calls seeking further information Thursday or Friday.

“Our top priority is to ensure the safety of Team Andersen, our service members and families,” Boswell said in the statements. “We are proud of our partnerships in place and for the swift actions taken by our security forces members in conjunction with local law enforcement.”

The incident and the use of force remains under investigation by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, Air Force Office of Special Investigation, Andersen security forces and Guam Police, Thursday’s statements said.

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PACIFIC

Alliance: North seen as trying to gain leverage

FROM FRONT PAGE

President Donald Trump has dismissed the launches as a bargaining tactic, saying they haven't violated North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's promise to suspend tests of long-range missiles and nuclear weapons that could threaten the U.S. mainland.

Instead, Trump has joined the North in its criticism of the "war games," which he has called very expensive and provocative. The president also has pressed South Korea to pay more to offset the costs of stationing 28,500 American troops on its soil.

Raising the price

Such comments represent an opportunity for the North Koreans, who are eager to take advantage of Trump's oft-stated antipathy to alliances, said David Maxwell, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Defense of Democracies think tank.

"I think they're probably going to return to some kind of negotiations, but in their mind, they're going to come to the negotiating table from a position of military strength, and that's what I think all of this is designed to do," he said in a telephone interview.

Maxwell said the North could offer to dismantle intercontinental ballistic missiles and reduce its stockpile of nuclear warheads in exchange for the reduction or removal of U.S. troops.

"They may believe that Trump will be willing to give security guarantees, which could come in the form of removing U.S. forces from the peninsula," he said.

Trump's administration insists it will maintain punishing economic sanctions against North Korea until the communist state agrees to give up its nuclear weapons. Special U.S. envoy Stephen Biegun is due to arrive in Seoul on Tuesday to "further strengthen coordination on the final, fully verified denuclearization of the DPRK," the State Department said, using the initials for the North's formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The president also has said in the past that he wouldn't use U.S. troops as bargaining chips in talks with North Korea, although he has frequently stated his desire to eventually withdraw them to save money.

Diplomatic efforts to persuade the North to abandon its nuclear weapons have eased tensions that raised fears of a new war as the North test-fired ICBMs and conducted three nuclear tests in 2016-17.

But talks stalled after Trump and Kim failed to reach an agreement during their second summit in February in Vietnam. The



KOREAN CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY, KOREA NEWS SERVICE/AP

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, seated, watches the test-firing of an unspecified new weapon at an undisclosed location in North Korea. The content of this image is as provided and cannot be independently verified.

'I think ... in their mind, they're going to come to the negotiating table from a position of military strength.'

David Maxwell

Defense of Democracies senior fellow

meeting exposed deep differences over the North's demands for relief from punishing sanctions in exchange for interim steps toward denuclearization.

Duyoon Kim, a Seoul-based fellow with the Center for a New American Security, said the recent missile-testing binge is aimed at persuading Trump to cancel the joint drills as well as to perfect short-range ballistic missiles and to offer a show of strength for North Korean hard-liners.

But she said Trump's dismissal of the drills was sending a worrisome message to U.S. allies in the region. "Perhaps Trump is picking his battles, hoping to give yet-to-be held negotiations a chance to begin and blossom," Duyoon wrote in a commentary for the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. "But his virtual blessing for short-range ballistic missile tests is telling his allies, South Korea and Japan, and American soldiers and expatriates that they are dispensable."

Improving defenses

South Korea also has been largely mum about the latest spate of missile tests as well as the North's recent insults targeting President Moon Jae-in and its rejection of his appeal to resume inter-Korean talks. But the country is clearly worried, with the defense ministry announcing last week that it will raise defense spending an average of 7.1% a year for the next five years.

The \$240 billion blueprint would focus on improving radar detection and other defense capabilities "against new types of ballistic missiles North Korea has recently test-fired," the ministry said Wednesday.

South Korea also has begun receiving new American F-35 stealth jets after agreeing to buy 40 of the state-of-the-art fighters by 2021.

Its air force also will be equipped with an RQ-4 Block 30 Global Hawk surveillance drone starting next month, local media reported.

Moon's administration also hopes to assume operational con-

trol of the military if war breaks out, a responsibility that currently would fall to the top U.S. general in South Korea.

The allies said that's the focus of the mainly computer-simulated military exercises that began

earlier this month.

North Korea was not appeased, saying Trump had agreed to suspend the drills in his first meeting with Kim last year in Singapore and again at their June 30 meeting on the Korean border.

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WAR ON TERRORISM

'Fought like a hero' Family of LaDavid Johnson, killed in Niger attack, receives his Silver Star

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

The family of a U.S. soldier killed during an October 2017 ambush in West Africa was presented the country's third-highest valor award Friday in Florida, the fourth posthumous medal for valor in that incident presented in the past week.

Sgt. LaDavid Johnson's widow received the Silver Star Medal on her husband's behalf from Maj. Gen. John Deedrick during a ceremony at Miami Gardens City Hall, Miami's WPLG Local 10 reported.

The 25-year-old soldier was among four Americans killed in the ambush and ensuing six-hour firefight outside the rural village of Tongo Tongo near Niger's border with Mali on Oct. 4, 2017. A team of some 40 Green Berets, support soldiers and Nigerian partner forces had been on a mission to capture or kill an Islamic State group leader in West Africa when they were attacked by more than 100 militants.

"Pacing overwhelming force, LaDavid fought like a warrior," Deedrick said at the ceremony. "LaDavid fought like a hero."

Johnson joined the Army in January 2014 as a wheeled vehicle mechanic and was assigned to 3rd Special Forces Group. He was on his second deployment to Niger when he was killed.

"Don't no medal really bring my husband back to me, but I acknowledge them for... recognizing my husband for his sacrifice for our country," his widow, Myeshia Johnson, told WPLG.

The couple's young son and two daughters, as well as Johnson's parents and siblings, attended the ceremony. Some were shirts printed with his name. They were the last family of the four soldiers killed in the ambush to receive a valor award presented posthumously in the past seven days.

In the aftermath of the attack, Johnson's body was not immediately recovered, leading to rumors he had been captured, which the Army has denied. An investigation later found that he



LYNNE SLADY/AP

Myeshia Johnson, center, the widow of Sgt. LaDavid Johnson, sits with her children LaDavid Jr. and Ahleesia, right, during a ceremony Friday awarding the Silver Star Medal to LaDavid Johnson, in Miami Gardens, Fla.

had run some 960 meters seeking cover from the attackers, and was killed in a barrage of small arms and heavy machine gunfire.

His death also drew attention as the center of a political spat between President Donald Trump and Florida Democratic Rep. Frederica Wilson. Wilson and Johnson's family members said that in a phone call to the soldier's pregnant widow, Trump said her husband "knew what he signed up for," as the family was traveling to meet the sergeant's body in October 2017.

The furore and the surprising loss of life in the ambush in a country many Americans seemed unaware the U.S. had troops on the ground in, stoked continued interest in the incident for months.

A summary of the Army's investigation released in May 2018 said that the joint U.S.-Nigerien team Johnson was with had dismounted their vehicles after first coming under fire and shot back while attempting to counter the attack. But realizing they were outnumbered by a well-trained force that was about to envelop them, they returned to their vehicles and broke contact.

In the confusion, two Nigerien

vehicles and one U.S. vehicle with three American soldiers did not withdraw. The trio — Staff Sgt. Dustin Wright, 29, Staff Sgt. Bryan C. Black, 35, and Staff Sgt. Jeremiah W. Johnson, 39 — continued to fight to their deaths and their bodies were later recovered near the initial ambush site.

Johnson, the driver of another vehicle, had been among the soldiers who fell back to a second position and began engaging the enemy again. When they were forced once more to break contact, Johnson and two Nigerian soldiers who tried to get into their vehicle were driven back into fighting positions by heavy enemy fire and then were forced to flee on foot as the militants closed in.

The two Nigerian soldiers were killed within about 600 meters. Johnson made it nearly a kilometer and took cover behind thick brush, continuing to fight under suppressive enemy fire from a vehicle-mounted heavy machine gun, the investigation said. His body was found there two days after the attack.

The sergeant's "courage and dedication to his team were unmatched, engaging a numerically superior hostile force, disrupting

the enemy's freedom of movement, and killing several enemy fighters before succumbing to his wounds," his Silver Star citation reads, WPLG reported.

Johnson had been hit as many as 18 times by fire from M-4 rifles — probably stolen by the insurgents — and Soviet-made heavy machine guns, officials told The Associated Press in the months after the attack.

As the incident and its aftermath garnered headlines, it brought scrutiny on special operations missions in Africa and led to multiple reviews.

Military officials have said mistakes were made in the mission's planning and approval, and they have blamed tactical confusion and a failure to rehearse ahead of the operation as factors contributing to its bloody outcome — the deadliest combat incident for U.S. forces in Africa since the 1993 downing of a Black Hawk helicopter in Somalia.

In its wake, U.S. Africa Command ordered changes to reduce risk to American troops and better prepare them for operations.

The long initial investigation into the incident drew criticism, however, after it resulted in rep-

rimands for mostly junior and midgrade officers and enlisted personnel, while only one general officer was punished. Another review, completed this spring, brought no additional disciplinary actions.

Johnson's widow and mother had reportedly walked out of an Army briefing on that review, at which families were presented the redacted investigation report in early June.

They and members of the other soldiers' families have complained about a long wait for answers about the incident, and some have said they wanted more senior officers held accountable for their part in ordering or overseeing aspects of the mission.

Meanwhile, the Army has approved nine valor awards for soldiers' actions on the day of the attack, including three Bronze Stars for valor and four Silver Stars.

In recent days, the Jeremiah Johnson and Black families were presented those soldiers' Bronze Star medals with "V" devices for valor. Wright's parents were presented his Silver Star in his honor.

The other awards include Silver Stars for two unnamed team members, a Bronze Star with valor, an Army Commendation Medal with valor and the Army Commendation Medal with "C" device for combat, the Pentagon has said.

Johnson's parents were honored that their son and the other soldiers who died with him nearly two years ago received valor medals, WPLG reported.

"I am so honored and grateful," his mother Cowanda Johnson said.

For the soldier's widow, even though the Friday ceremony was recognizing her husband's heroism, it was painful, she told the news station.

"It's a sad moment for me," Myeshia Johnson said. "It still hurts me."

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Bombing: Taliban calls ISIS attack in Kabul 'forbidden and unjustifiable'

FROM FRONT PAGE

The emergence of the ISIS affiliate in recent years might be the greatest threat to Afghan civilians as the U.S. and Taliban seek agreement to end nearly 18 years of fighting. While the U.S. wants Taliban assurances that Afghanistan will no longer be used as a launchpad for global terror attacks, there appear to be no guarantees of protection for Afghan civilians.

The Taliban, which the U.S. hopes will help curb the ISIS affiliate's rise, condemned Saturday's attack as "forbidden and unjustifiable."

The blast took place in a western Kabul neighborhood that is home to many in the country's minority Shiite Hazara community. ISIS, which declared war on Afghanistan's Shiites nearly two years ago

and has claimed responsibility for many attacks targeting them in the past, said in a statement that a Pakistani ISIS fighter seeking martyrdom targeted a large Shiite gathering.

The wedding, to which more than 1,200 people had been invited, was, in fact, a mixed crowd of Shiites and Sunnis, said the event hall's owner, Hussain Ali.

Ali's workers were still finding body parts, including hands, in the shattered wedding hall, its floor strewn with broken glass, pieces of furniture and victims' shoes.

"We have informed the police to come and collect them," he said.

The bomber detonated his explosives near the stage where musicians were playing and "all the youths, children and all the

people who were there were killed," said Gul Muhammad, another witness.

Survivors described a panicked scene in the suddenly darkened hall as people screamed and scrambled to find loved ones.

"I was with the groom in the other room when we heard the blast and then I couldn't find anyone," said Ahmad Omid, who said the groom was his father's cousin. "Everyone was lying all around the hall."

The blast at the wedding hall, known as Dubai City, shattered a period of relative calm in Kabul.

Messages of shock poured in on Sunday. "Such acts are beyond condemnation," the European Union mission to Afghanistan said. "An act of extreme depravity," U.S. Ambassador John Bass said. A deliberate

attack on civilians "can only be described as a covar of terror," U.N. envoy to Afghanistan Tadamichi Yamamoto said.

The explosion came just ahead of Afghanistan's 100th Independence Day on Monday. The city, long familiar with checkpoints and razor wire, has been under heavier security. It was not immediately clear if planned events in Kabul would go ahead.

The attack also comes at a greatly uncertain time in Afghanistan as the U.S. and the Taliban appear to be within days of a deal on ending the war after several rounds of talks this year.

"Taliban cannot absolve themselves of blame, for they provide platform for terrorists," President Ashraf Ghani said on Twitter, declaring a day of mourning and calling the attack "inhuman."

NATION

Portland 'ground zero' as rival groups protest

BY GILLIAN FLACCUS
Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Hundreds of far-right protesters and anti-fascist counterdemonstrators swarmed downtown Portland, Ore., on Saturday for a long-hyped rally that attracted President Donald Trump's attention and resulted in at least 13 arrests.

Police seized metal poles, bear spray and other weapons and closed bridges and streets to try to keep the rival groups apart. They were largely successful. Six minor injuries were reported.

"This was a dynamic event with demonstrators frequently moving from one part of the city to another," Mayor Ted Wheeler said at an evening news conference.

Leaders of the right-wing groups vowed to return to Portland, saying they would keep coming back to the liberal West Coast city so long as the left-wing anti-fascists, known as antifa, groups remained active.

President Donald Trump weighed in early Saturday, writing on Twitter that "Portland is being watched very closely ... Hopefully the Mayor will be able to properly do his job."

He also wrote that "major consideration is being given to naming ANTIFA an 'ORGANIZATION OF TERROR.'" It wasn't immediately clear what he meant by that because there's no mechanism for the United States government to declare a domestic organization a terrorism group.

Joe Biggs, the organizer of the right-wing gathering, said it was a success.

"Go look at President Trump's Twitter," he told The Oregonian/OregonLive. "He talked about Portland, said he's watching antifa. That's all we wanted."

At the evening news conference Portland's mayor said Biggs was not welcome. "We do not want him here in my city, period," Wheeler said.

Wheeler tied the demonstrations to "a



PHOTOS BY NOAH BERGER/AP

Joseph Oakman and fellow Proud Boys plant a flag in Tom McCall Waterfront Park during an "End Domestic Terrorism" rally in Portland, Ore., on Saturday.



A counterprotester confronts members of the Proud Boys and other right-wing demonstrators during the rally.

rising white nationalist movement" and a growing sense of fear in the country.

"We're certainly seeing that play out,"

he said. "Portland being a very progressive community is always going to be at or near ground zero of this battle."

The events began late Saturday morning. Flag-waving members of the Proud Boys, Three Percenters militia group and others gathered downtown, some wearing body armor and helmets like the antifa protesters. Police said they had seized the weapons, including shields, from multiple groups as they assembled along the Willamette River, which runs through the city.

More than two dozen local, state and federal law enforcement agencies, including the FBI, were in the city for the right-wing rally. Portland police said all of the city's 1,000 officers would be on duty for the gathering that was hyped on social media and elsewhere for weeks.

As of early afternoon, most of the right-wing groups had left the area via a downtown bridge. Police used officers on bikes and in riot gear to keep black-clad, mask-wearing anti-fascist protesters from following them.

But hundreds of people remained downtown and on nearby streets, and there were skirmishes throughout the day. Police declared a gathering of mostly left-wing protesters near Pioneer Courthouse Square a "civil disturbance" and told people to leave.

Police spokeswoman Lt. Tina Jones at one point said there were about 1,200 on the streets, but that number fell throughout the day.

The self-described anti-fascists had vowed to confront the right-wing rally, while leaders from the far right urged their followers to turn out in large numbers to protest the arrests of six members of right-wing groups in the run-up to the event.

Patriot Prayer's Joey Gibson, who organized similar rallies in 2017 and 2018 that erupted in clashes, surrendered Friday on an arrest warrant for felony rioting. He was at a confrontation that broke out on May 1 outside a bar where antifa members had gathered after a May Day demonstration.

Gun control advocates call for new laws at rallies

Associated Press

Gun control advocates rallied around the country Saturday, seeking to pressure Congress to tighten the nation's gun laws after the recent mass shootings in El Paso, Texas; Dayton, Ohio, and Northern California.

Several dozen people gathered in Providence, R.I. Some held signs that said, "Disarm Hate," "Enough" and "No One Needs a Weapon of War at Home."

In Baltimore, activists organized a march. Protesters in Charleston, W.Va., carried signs that called for changing Congress if it didn't change gun laws.

Demonstrators also gathered in front of City Hall in San Francisco.

The group Everytown for Gun Safety announced recently that it planned to hold rallies over the weekend in every state. The group is demanding a strong federal "red flag" bill to allow seizure of weapons

in certain cases and legislation requiring background checks on all gun sales.

Congress is on summer recess, but Republican Senate Majority leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky has asked committee chairmen to review possible gun bills for consideration when lawmakers return in September.

Democrats on the House Judiciary Committee announced Friday that they will be returning early to consider other gun vio-

lence legislation. The House has already approved legislation bolstering background checks for gun purchases.

The gunman in El Paso and Dayton killed a total of 31 people in back-to-back weekend shootings in early August that stunned the nation and revived calls to tighten access to firearms.

Those shootings came days after another gunman opened fire at a festival in Gilroy, Calif., killing three people.

NRA wants role when North meets state investigators

BY LARRY NEUMEISTER
AND MICHAEL R. SISAK
Associated Press

NEW YORK — A National Rifle Association leader-turned-critic is meeting with New York investigators this week, and the NRA wants to be there.

New York's attorney general's office is questioning Oliver North on Tuesday as it probes whether the NRA broke laws governing its nonprofit status.

The powerful gun lobby asked a New York state judge Friday to let it in the meeting, saying it would be "severely prejudiced" if privileged information is divulged.

In court papers, it said it had asked the

attorney general's office to be included in the meeting but was told it would be burdensome and was refused.

The NRA cited grounds why some information could be kept from investigators, including attorney-client privilege, work-product rules and other unspecified privileges.

NRA lawyers said they reviewed 899 pages of documents from North's lawyers that were prepared for investigators and found several dozen examples of privileged information that had not been redacted.

In a statement, New York Attorney General Letitia James defended the integrity of her office. "The NRA's scare tactics simply won't work here," the statement said. "Our

investigation is proceeding with the same focus and fairness we apply to any case. Whether its deposing NRA leaders or fact-finding through other investigative tools, we will ensure that justice is served because no one is above the law."

The NRA is facing several legal battles. The attorney general of the District of Columbia has subpoenaed the group and its related charitable organization in a probe into financial misconduct allegations. The U.S. Senate Finance Committee also has launched an investigation into the NRA's operations.

North was forced out as the NRA's president in the spring just ahead of the group's annual meeting.



MICHAEL CONROY/AP

Col. Oliver North, who was forced out as the National Rifle Association's president in the spring, will be questioned by New York's attorney general's office Tuesday.

NATION

Shooting suspect charged in Pa. standoff

By ANNA ORSO

The Philadelphia Inquirer

PHILADELPHIA — Attempted murder charges were filed Saturday against Maurice Hill for allegedly shooting six Philadelphia police officers during a dramatic 7½-hour standoff Wednesday, the largest mass shooting of Philadelphia police in decades.

Charges were also brought against four men accused of being involved in what police have described as an illegal drug operation led by Hill, two of whom were trapped along with two police officers in the Tioga house while the evening shootout paralyzed a neighborhood and made national news.

Hill, 36, appeared at an arraignment Saturday morning via video conference while he was being held at a Philadelphia police investigative unit at 24th and Wood Streets in South Philadelphia.

The father of two, including a daughter born two days before the shooting, appeared defiant, sitting with his arms crossed and head down. He responded "I guess" when the magistrate asked if he understood the charges against him, and then said "I am not an immediate danger" to a prosecutor argued he should remain in custody and be denied bail.

After the hearing, Hill, who was denied bail, was transferred

to Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility on State Road, jail records show.

Charged with 11 counts of attempted murder, Hill faces a litany of other charges, including aggravated assault, assault of a law enforcement officer, and other drug and firearm possession offenses. District Attorney Larry Krasner has said that Hill could spend the rest of his life in prison. A representative from the Defender Association of Philadelphia argued on his behalf.

Six Philadelphia police officers were shot and two others were trapped in a house with the gunman for hours on Aug. 14 during a shootout-turned-standoff.

Terrence Williams, 32, and Ronald Ellis, 37, both of Philadelphia — the two alleged drug dealers upstairs in the house as Hill allegedly fired an AK-15 at police outside — were charged with drug possession with intent to deliver and conspiracy.

Also charged with drug possession with intent to deliver and conspiracy — but not present in the 15th Street house during Wednesday's shooting — were Dwayne Turner, 31, of West Chester and Raynell Rodgers, 30, of Philadelphia.

On Wednesday afternoon, Hill, who has an extensive criminal history, opened fire with an AR-15, authorities believe, as narcotics officers barged into 3716 N. 15th Street after reportedly seeing someone carry a duffel bag



ELIZABETH ROBERTSON, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER/AP

Shooting suspect Maurice Hill is taken into custody after an hourslong standoff with police Thursday. Six police officers were wounded in the standoff.

into that house.

Hill surrendered just after midnight, after tear gas was fired into the house, where police said an AR-15 was found. Hill had a handgun in his pocket, police said.

At Saturday's arraignment hearings, Assistant District At-

torney Lyandra Retacco said that police on Wednesday had spotted Williams running with a black plastic bag from 3712 N. 15th St., where police had executed the search warrant, into 3716 N. 15th St., where the shootout and standoff ensued.

Records show Williams co-

owns the latter home.

Williams has several prior convictions, including a 2017 guilty plea to charges of endangering the welfare of a child, a 2012 guilty plea to charges related to filing a false insurance claim, and a 2008 conviction for marijuana possession.

Funerals held for 4 kids killed in a day care fire

Associated Press

ERIE, Pa. — Residents of a Pennsylvania city gathered to mourn and remember four of the five children who died when fire swept through a home child care center.

A funeral service was held Saturday in Erie for La'Myha Jones, 8, Luther Jones Jr., 6, Ava Jones, 4, and 9-month-old Jaydan Augustyniak. All are siblings. The funeral for Dalvin Pacey, 2, will be held Monday.

Three of the victims were the children of a volunteer firefighter, Luther Jones. Their mother, Shevona Overton, is also the mother of Jaydan. An adult and two adolescent boys were able to escape. Fire officials suspect

Sunday's blaze was accidental and possibly electrical.

"There are things that happen in this life that take years to understand. There are things that happen in this life that we will never understand," said Mayor Joe Schember. "Why are bright, beautiful children taken away from us in a tragic accident in the middle of the night?"

The most important lesson from such a tragedy, Schember said, "is to really value and treasure the relatives and friends that are still with us." And he said, "only a strong belief in God can help us humans through a loss like this."

The Rev. Charles Mock of Community Baptist Church drew



JACK HANRAHAN, ERIE (Pa.) TIMES-NEWS/AP

Bishop Dwane Brock of the Victory Christian Center speaks during the funeral service for siblings La'Myha Jones, 8; Luther Jones Jr., 6; Ava Jones, 4; and Jaydan Augustyniak, 9 months, Saturday.

an ovation as he urged the community that had come together "Don't stop now."

"Don't stop the kisses, don't stop the hugs, don't stop the warm

embraces, don't stop the coming together, don't stop the partnerships that have come out of five children who have gone into heaven," he said.

Ohio mayor threatened after Trump comments

Associated Press

DAYTON, Ohio — The mayor of Dayton where nine people were slain in a mass shooting says around-the-clock security detail was assigned to her because of hate-filled messages she received following verbal sparring with President Donald Trump after his visit to a Dayton hospital earlier this month.

The Dayton Daily News reported after Trump's Aug. 7 visit, he called a news conference Mayor Nan Whaley held with Ohio's Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown "a fraud."

Whaley responded in an interview with CNN that Trump is a "bully and a coward."

The newspaper reported it reviewed dozens of messages regarding Whaley that contained abusive language and expellated insults.

The messages prompted city officials to assign Whaley the police security detail.

Dayton police say there were no specific threats directed toward Whaley.

Kudlow: White House is 'looking at' trying to buy Greenland

The Washington Post

White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow on Sunday confirmed that the Trump administration is exploring trying to buy the country of Greenland, noting that the self-governing country is

a "strategic place" that is rich in minerals.

"It's developing. We're looking at it," Kudlow said on "Fox News Sunday." Denmark owns Greenland. Denmark is an ally. Greenland is a strategic place... I'm just saying the president, who knows

a thing or two about buying real estate, wants to take a look."

President Donald Trump's desire to buy Greenland, which is part of the kingdom of Denmark, was first reported last week by the Wall Street Journal.

Trump is scheduled to visit

Denmark in two weeks. In the days since news of Trump's interest in Greenland broke, the idea has been ridiculed by politicians in Denmark, and Greenland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Friday that the island is not for sale.

NATION

'Our love is for him'

Strangers gather to mourn El Paso victim

BY RUSSELL CONTRERAS
Associated Press

EL PASO, Texas — Thousands of strangers came to say goodbye to a woman who was killed in a mass shooting in El Paso after hearing her longtime companion had few family members left.

Antonio Basco had told reporters he felt alone in planning the funeral for Margie Reckard, one of 22 people killed when a gunman opened fire at a Walmart on Aug. 3. Basco had almost no family left, so he invited the world to join him in remembering his companion of 22 years.

He thought he might get a few well-wishers from El Paso.

Then, the flowers started coming in.

Then, the funeral home had to change venues.

People came from California, Arizona, Texas, New Mexico and across the border in Mexico. They stood in line for hours Friday for Reckard's funeral, then patiently waited Saturday in sweltering temperatures as Basco buried her.

Few of those in attendance had ever met Reckard, but almost all said the suffering city — and the nation — needed to see how to rally around those in pain.

Jordan Ballard, 38, of Los Angeles, said she lived in New York City during the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and in Oklahoma City during the 1995 bombing. After reading about Basco online, she bought a plane ticket Thursday.

"The potential of him experiencing this alone made me come," she said. "I know if I was lost, my family had each other."

'We wanted to be here'

Angelique Tadeo, 52, her husband, Paul, 69, and their granddaughter, 3, drove more than four hours from Tucson, Ariz. Tadeo worked as a nurse and treated victims during the 2011 shooting in Tucson that injured former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords and killed six.

"We know what the city is going through and we wanted to be here," Tadeo said.

As soon as he got the memorial details, Jerry Brown, 58, of San Angelo, Texas, got in his car and drove 400 miles in six hours.

"In the military, we have this saying: 'We don't leave people behind,'" said Brown, a veteran. "It didn't matter where I was. I knew I was going to come here today." He got into town, stood in line



MARK LAMBIE, THE EL PASO (TEXAS) TIMES/AP

Antonio Basco greets some of the hundreds in line to attend his longtime companion Margie Reckard's funeral at La Paz Faith Memorial & Spiritual Center in El Paso, Texas, on Friday.

for hours to pay his respects and planned on driving all night back home for a child's soccer practice. But he paused for a moment to look at the crowd of strangers who had created a line that wrapped around the block and into the city's Manhattan Heights Historic District.

"This is amazing," said Brown, a contractor.

"This is El Paso, bro," Jerry Medina, 42, of El Paso, wearing a black-and-red zoot suit, said when asked about the crowd.

He brushed off the 100-degree temperatures and wore a similar suit the next day to the burial.

"I really felt for that guy," Medina said. "Our love is for him. Hopefully, he gets through this."

'I started crying'

Isabel Regalado, 27, held her 10-month-old boy, Preston Regalado-Soliz, as she stood in line for more than two hours with her husband, Esteban Soliz.

"As we drove up here, I started crying," Regalado said. "It's beautiful."

The family had been heading to the mall where the gunman opened fire that day. Regalado stops before continuing the story, holding back tears.

A mariachi band begins playing for the people in line. Some clap. The band plays recognizable tunes to many in El Paso. Then the musicians cross the street and play "Amor Eterno," the 1984 ballad by the late Juan Gabriel that has become an anthem of sorts in El Paso in the days after the shooting.

"How I wish that you still lived, that your precious eyes had never closed, so that I could see them now," the translated lyrics go.

The lips of a woman in line quiver. She eventually breaks down and walks away. Another woman offers to hold her place in line.



RUSSELL CONTRERAS/AP

Mourners wait in line Friday for the memorial services.

Emma Portela, 81, who drove in from Chihuahua, Mexico, shakes her head: "That song has so much power right now."

Glen Blasdel, 83, standing alone, was one of the first in line. "I know what it's like to have no family," said Blasdel, a Vietnam War veteran who drove in from nearby Las Cruces, N.M.

Moments before burying his companion, Basco spoke to reporters.

"My life is not complete no more," he said. But when he looked out and saw a crowd of 3,000 on Friday, he was in awe. "It's the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen."

In the days ahead, Basco plans on resting and keeping in touch with new friends.

He still speaks to Reckard as if she's in the room. "She loved El Paso. She would have loved this," he said.

Then, he turned toward a hearse, got inside and rode to the burial site, where more strangers were waiting.



JORGE SALGADO/AP

A mourner weeps during the service.

NATION

July was Alaska's warmest month ever

By DAN JOLING
Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Alaska has been America's canary in the coal mine for climate warning, and the yellow bird is swooning.

July was Alaska's warmest month ever, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Sea ice melted. Bering Sea fish swam in above-normal temperatures. So did children in the coastal town of Nome. Wildfire season started early and stayed late. Thousands of walrus thronged to shore.

Unusual weather events like this could become more common with climate warming, said Brian Brettschneider, an associate climate researcher at the University of Alaska Fairbanks' International Arctic Research Center. Alaska has seen "multiple decades-long increases" in temperature, he said.

"It becomes easier to have these unusual sets of conditions that now lead to records," Brettschneider said.

Alaska's average temperature in July was 58.1 degrees. That's 5.4 degrees above average and 0.8 degrees higher than the previous warmest month of July 2004, NOAA said.

The effects were felt from the Arctic Ocean to the world's largest temperate rainforest on Alaska's Panhandle.

Anchorage, the state's largest city, on July 4 for the first time hit 90 degrees at Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, 5 degrees higher than the city's previous recorded high of 85 degrees.

Sea ice off Alaska's north and northwest shore and other Arctic regions retreated to the lowest level ever recorded for July, according to the National Snow and Ice Data Center at the University of Colorado.



DAN JOLING/AP

Denise Armitage of Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia, photographs dahlias at gardens in Town Square in Anchorage, Alaska, on Thursday.

Arctic sea ice for July set a record low of 2.9 million square miles. That was a South Carolina-size loss of 30,900 square miles below the previous record low July in 2012.

Sea ice is the main habitat for polar bears and a resting platform for female walrus and their young. Several thousand walrus came to shore July 30, the first time they've been spotted in such large numbers before August.

Effects were less obvious in the Bering Sea off Alaska's west coast. Lyle Britt, a NOAA Fisheries biologist who oversees the agency's annual Bering Sea groundfish survey, was on a trawler east of the island of Saint Matthew during the first week of July.

"The temperature out there for us was in the high 70s," Britt said. "On those boats, everything up there is designed to conserve heat, not vent heat. It was unbearably warm inside the boat."

On the ocean bottom, Britt's crew for the second consecutive year found scant evidence of a "cold pool," the east-west barrier of extremely cold, salty water that traditionally concentrates Pacific cod and walleye pollock, the species that make fast-food fish sandwiches, in the southeastern Bering Sea.

Alaska's wildfire season started in April. July's dry and hot temperatures extended it. An expected rainy season marked by southwest winds pushing up moisture and soaking fires did not show up on time, said Tim Mowry, spokesman for the state Division of Forestry.

"It extended our fire season through the month of July," Mowry said.

Alaska by mid-July can usually free up crews to fight fires in other states, but only about 15 people have left this year. High fire danger around Anchorage, the Kenai Peninsula and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough has kept crews in Alaska.

"We've pretty much held on to all our resources in-state at this point," Mowry said.

A burn ban and water sprinkler restrictions remain in place for Haines, just outside the Tongass National Forest. July extended a drought in the rainforest, said Rick Thoman, another climate expert at the International Arctic Research Center.

Cities in the southern half of the rainforest have limited or no hydropower because of low water levels. That means power has to be generated by burning diesel fuel, Thoman said.

July was the hottest month measured on Earth since records began in 1880, NOAA reported Thursday. And a United Nations report earlier this month warned that global warming threatens food supplies around the world.

But Alaska's recent heat has had silver linings. Barley and other crops are ready to harvest, said Stephen Brown of the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service.

The growing season has been extended by a month, and if extra days become the norm, they will expand what can be grown in the state. Brown used heat radiated from his blacktop driveway to grow fruit not usually seen outside greenhouses.

"I've got a bumper crop of tomatoes and jalapenos this summer," he said.

On the other hand, the weather has stressed birch trees and left them vulnerable to leaf-eating insects.

"That gives the leaf miners opportunity to really wreck them good," he said. "I'm looking at my lawn right now, and I need to rake leaves."

Brettschneider, the climate researcher, sees mostly negative effects from the hot July and climate warming. Alaska looks the way it does because of the temperature regime, he said, and in 50 years, Alaska may look like Idaho.

"We should expect changes. We should expect the forests to be in different locations. We should expect wildlife to move. We should expect plants to move. And in many cases, if they can't move fast enough, we should expect them to just go away," he said.

Homeless man held in NY after subway scare

By MICHAEL R. SISAK
AND JENNIFER PELTZ
Associated Press

NEW YORK — A homeless man from West Virginia faced charges Saturday for allegedly placing two devices that looked like pressure cookers in a New York City subway station, forcing an evacuation and snarling the morning commute, police said.

Larry Kenton Griffin II, of Bruno, W.Va., was awaiting arraignment late Saturday in Manhattan's central booking after he was released from a New York hospital where he was being treated and under observation. Police did not specify what, if any, injuries or condition he was being treated for.

Police announced on Saturday evening that Griffin, 26, was charged with the placing of a false bomb. He was taken into police custody just after midnight Saturday in the Bronx, a day after he was seen in surveillance video at Manhattan's Fulton subway station holding one of the objects police identified as rice cookers and determined they were not explosives.

A West Virginia sheriff's de-

partment said Griffin had a criminal history in the state.

The Logan County Sheriff's Department said it has arrested him at least three times in the past eight years, including a 2017 arrest on charges alleging he sent obscene material to a minor.

Griffin's cousin Tara Brumfield told a Huntington, W.Va., television station that he is a good person who has been dealing with mental health issues.

Offering a possible explanation for his involvement with the rice cookers, she said Griffin has a habit of picking up items in one place and putting them down in another.

"Whether it's tools or a fishing pole or something like that like he'll pick up one thing and leave it there and then pick up another and then leave it there and I've watched him do stuff like that a bunch of times," she told the station, WSAZ-TV.

It wasn't immediately known if Griffin had a lawyer representing him in the New York case.

New York City police said security cameras captured a man pulling the cookers out of a shopping cart and placing them in the Fulton Street subway station near



KEVIN HAGEN/AP

An investigator picks up a suspicious package that was thought to be an explosive device in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood on Friday in New York.

the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan.

A third cooker of the same make, year and model was found about 2 miles away on a sidewalk in the Chelsea neighborhood, prompting another police investigation.

Police stressed at a news conference on Friday that it wasn't clear if the man was trying to frighten people or merely throwing the objects away.

"I would stop very short of calling him a suspect," said John Miller, the New York Police Department's top counterterrorism official.

"It is possible that somebody put out a bunch of items in the trash today and this guy picked them up and then discarded them, or it's possible that this was an intentional act."

Police tracked Griffin down about 13 hours after releasing a flyer asking people to help them identify him. Social media posts from the department described him as a person of interest who was wanted for questioning. The Logan County Sheriff's Department said it assisted an FBI task force by speaking with Griffin's relatives in hopes of obtaining his possible location.

Small plane crashes into house in New York

Associated Press

UNION VALE, N.Y. — New York state police say a small plane crashed into a house in a rural town near Poughkeepsie, setting it on fire.

The National Transportation Safety Board tweeted that they're investigating why the Cessna 303 came down Sunday afternoon in Union Vale, about 15 miles southeast of Poughkeepsie.

The Federal Aviation Administration says three people were on the plane. No details were immediately available on their condition or that of anyone inside the home.

Firefighters responded to the scene, as did police and emergency medical vehicles from surrounding communities.

The Poughkeepsie Journal reports that smoke could be seen rising from the home, but there was no word on any occupants.

The plane crashed about one mile from Sky Acres Airport, which serves mostly small aircraft.

NATION

Critics: Oregon's tsunami-zone law courts disaster

By ANDREW SELSKY
Associated Press

NEWPORT, Ore. — With sunlight sparkling off surrounding Yaquina Bay, workers are putting up an ocean-studies building smack in the middle of an area expected to one day be hit by a tsunami.

Experts say it's only a matter of time before a shift in a major fault line off the Oregon coast causes a massive earthquake that generates a tsunami as much as seven stories tall.

Even as work on Oregon State University's Marine Studies Building was underway in Newport, the Legislature went a step further and repealed a ban on construction of new "critical facilities" in tsunami inundation zones, allowing fire stations, police stations and schools to be built in the potential path of a tsunami.

Passage of the bill in June was little noticed during one of the most tumultuous legislative sessions in Oregon history. But it has since been roundly criticized — including by Gov. Kate Brown, who told journalists the bill's passage was one of her disappointments, even though she signed the measure and previously said it benefited economic development.

Chris Goldfinger, an Oregon State University professor and an earthquake geologist, says putting the \$60 million oceanography building in the path of a tsunami is "beyond ironic," and allowing even more construction threatens lives in favor of development.

"It's foolhardy. In every other country in the world, best practice for tsunamis is avoidance, not building in a tsunami zone," Goldfinger said at a symposium for journalists in Newport that included a tour of the construction project.

Proponents of the university facility point out that the build-

By the numbers

37%

Odds of an earthquake in the Cascadia subduction zone within 50 years.

1700

The last time there was a tsunami from a Cascadia earthquake, an estimated 9.

SOURCE: The Associated Press

ing will withstand strong earthquakes and be higher than the biggest tsunami. It will also feature a rooftop evacuation site that can accommodate more than 900 people, accessed via an exterior ramp.

Two days of supplies, including water, food and first aid, will be kept on the roof, said Cinamon Moffett, research facility coordinator for the marine center. Once the water subsides, survivors would be evacuated to a community college on a nearby hill, she said.

An earthquake in the Cascadia subduction zone, which extends in the ocean off Northern California to Canada's Vancouver Island, has a 37% probability of happening off Oregon in the next 50 years, with a slightly lower chance of one striking near Washington state, Goldfinger said. Cascadia earthquakes have an average magnitude of around 9, making them among the world's biggest.

Evidence of a Cascadia earth-



PHOTOS BY ANDREW SELSKY/AP

Crystal Sanderson with Portland-based Yost Grube Hall Architecture, shows an emergency access ramp that is being built alongside Oregon State University's Marine Studies Building. The roof will serve as a vertical evacuation zone for almost 1,000 fleeing a tsunami that an offshore quake would generate.

quake's awesome destructive power is visible 30 miles up the coast from Newport.

There, a "ghost forest" of Sitka spruces juts up from a beach in the tiny town of Neskovin. An earthquake 2,000 years ago likely caused the ground beneath the trees to plunge, and tsunami debris buried them. The remnants were partially uncovered by storms in 1997. Today, the barnacle-encrusted trees stand like sentinels, facing the Pacific Ocean with vacation homes and a motel nearby.

The last time the ocean reared up from a Cascadia earthquake was in 1700. The estimated magnitude 9 quake sent a tsunami across the Pacific into the coast of Japan, where it flooded farm fields, damaged fishermen's shacks and ascended a castle moat. In the Pacific Northwest and Canada, the impact was far worse, and is described in the folklore of indigenous peoples. One tale describes a struggle between a thunderbird and a whale that caused the earth to shake and the ocean to wash away people and homes.

Oregon became a leader in tsunami preparedness when the Legislature, in 1995, banned construction of certain public facilities in inundation zones.

Vancouver Island in Canada's British Columbia province was slammed by the 1700 tsunami. But no law prohibits construction of public buildings in tsunami zones there, according to Emergency Management BC. Washington state requires municipalities and counties to establish rules to limit development in areas that are frequently flooded or could be hit by tsunamis, landslides or other calamities.

California has no state-mandated development restrictions in tsunami zones, said Rick Wilson, senior engineering geologist with the California Geological Survey. But the state recently adopted new language in its building code requiring that certain types of buildings be constructed to withstand tsunami forces, Wilson said. Other states are moving to do the same, using standards from the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Japan, reacting to a 2011 earthquake and tsunami that left more than 18,000 dead or presumed dead, passed a law allowing towns to set tsunami warning zones and make evacuation and reconstruction plans. The government is spending \$9 billion to build giant seawalls around the northern coastline. Moving to higher ground is not required, though some coastal communities have done so.

"Oregon has gone from sort of a leader in this to full reverse," said Goldfinger, who was attending a seismology conference in Japan when the 2011 earthquake hit.

Oregon lawmakers overwhelmingly repealed the 1995 construction ban in June, as tensions in the Capitol ratcheted up over Republican opposition to a bill addressing global warming. Few people attended hearings at which lawmakers from coastal districts testified in favor of the repeal.

Democratic Rep. David Gomborg, one of its sponsors, told members of a House committee to imagine the impacts if the state banned new schools, parking garages and police and fire stations in their communities.

"What would be the consequence of that, to your ability to get insurance on your home, your

ability to attract a new business into a neighborhood that's not safe enough for fire departments, your ability to resell your home in a neighborhood not safe enough for police departments?" Gomborg asked.

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Chris Goldfinger, an Oregon State University professor and expert on earthquakes and tsunamis, talks about the probability of a large tsunami-generating earthquake occurring off the Oregon coast in Newport, Ore.

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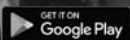
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NATION

Tiffany looks to pump sales with men's collection



ROE ETHRIDGE/AP

Tiffany & Co. announced it is launching a jewelry collection for men in October to try to attract more customers.

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Tiffany & Co. is launching its first comprehensive jewelry collection for men in October as the upscale chain taps into a trend popularized by the likes of Jay-Z and John Mayer.

The move, announced Thursday, is part of the Tiffany's strategy to attract millennials and pump up sales, which have been dampened by a decline in spending by international tourists.

Historically, Tiffany's has offered classic men's accessories like money clips, cuff links, rings and conservative jewelry. The New York-based luxury jeweler will still to carry those items, but now is adding more modern takes on men's high-end jewelry.

The new men's collection includes nearly 100 designs ranging in price from about \$200 to \$15,000 for jewelry, and up to \$75,000 and beyond for men's

home furnishings and accessories such as cocktail shakers, ice tongs and beer mugs.

Tiffany's plans to create distinctive outfits for the men's collection in each of its 300 stores around the world, according to Reed Krakoff, the company's chief artistic director who developed the collection.

High-end jewelry is popping up on men's fashion runways at Gucci and other big luxury brands, said Robert Burke, an independent fashion consultant.

He also pointed to the influential Dover Street Market stores in London, Tokyo and New York, which are highlighting men's jewelry.

Saks Fifth Avenue's New York flagship this fall is also opening a jewelry area called The Vault that will showcase high-end men's watches.

Global sales of men's fine jewelry reached \$5.8 billion last

year, up 23% from 2013, according to Euromonitor International, a market research company. That's still dwarfed by women's fine jewelry, which reached \$33.2 billion, up 14% from in 2013, according to Euromonitor.

But sales for men's luxury jewelry have shown healthy increases.

"Men all over the world are wearing jewelry and more accessories as part of a wardrobe," said Krakoff in an interview with The Associated Press. "You started to see it on the runways, in social media."

Krakoff said that the men's business hasn't been a big focus at Tiffany, but there's a big opportunity given that half of the company's global customers are men. The vast majority of them buy women's jewelry, he says.

"We have a captive audience," he said.

Ice company spearheads cocktail revolution

By MACK BURKE

The Norman (Okla.) Transcript

NORMAN, Okla. — There's more to ice than meets the eye.

No one knows that better than the folks at Vault Ice, a Norman-based company whose sole focus is making the cleanest, clearest ice possible.

It's a difference you can see — their specialty cocktail ice cubes are stunningly clear — but there's more to it than that. Or, more aptly, less to it.

When you freeze ice at home, the water takes on odors and tastes of what's around it, from cardboard boxes to that questionable carton of ice cream in the back, as it rapidly freezes from the outside in.

The same purity concern extends to ice machines at commercial restaurants, said Seth Stevenson, Vault's director of business development (and former stuntman).

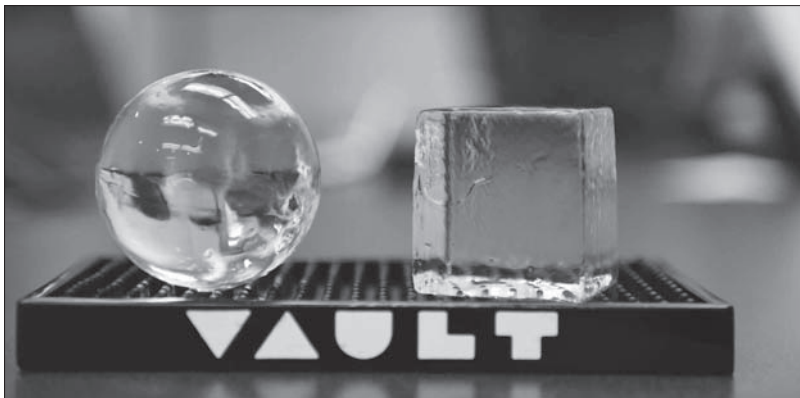
"Our water is pure, so when it does dilute, you're not getting any sediments, any impurities, no weird, funky aroma, because it is frozen in specialty freezers," he told The Norman Transcript.

Vault Ice begins as Norman water. It goes through a rigorous, three-stage filtration process that includes reverse osmosis and a UV filter before it is frozen in solid, 300-pound blocks.

It is then cut, stamped (if desired) and vacuum-sealed to ensure a cocktail experience that take top shelf liquor up to 11.

Unlike ice blocks and spheres produced with molds, Vault Ice doesn't have any oxygen trapped inside or cloudiness from contaminants. The result is an unblemished piece of ice that borders on art with all the density of a jawbreaker.

Apart from its sleek, sophisticated aesthetic appeal, Stevenson said Vault Ice delivers something no other ice does: true, unadulterated flavor.



KYLE PHILLIPS, THE NORMAN (OKLA.) TRANSCRIPT/AP

Vault Ice is shown at the company's headquarters in Norman, Okla. Vault Ice begins as Norman water. It goes through a three-stage filtration process before it is frozen in 300-pound blocks.

“Distillers spent 15 years bottling your favorite spirit so you can enjoy it. Do you really want to ruin that with bad ice?”

Seth Stevenson

Vault's director of business development

"Distillers spent 15 years bottling your favorite spirit so you can enjoy it," he said. "Do you really want to ruin that with bad ice?"

Because it melts more slowly, due to less surface area and the lack of trapped oxygen, Vault Ice dilutes drinks at a much slower rate.

With regular ice, for instance, a drink can undergo a 3-ounce dilution in 10 minutes. A drink with a single cube of Vault Ice experiences just a 1-ounce dilution in the same amount of time.

As Stevenson explains, it brings the olfactory elements of spirits to the top while

pushing the ethanol "burn" to the bottom for a smooth and balanced delivery.

"The main thing is, (well ice) creates so much water that it creates a pool, a surface area on top of the water that removes all of the scent. And if you can't smell something, you can't taste it."

"So, the experience for a Vault Ice user is very different. You're getting the most pure, most authentic version of a drink on the rock that you can get."

Once you've had Vault Ice, Stevenson, now a self-described ice snob, said you'll never go back to "freezer funk" cocktails. The specialty ice is available at some Nor-

man establishments, like The Winston and Scratch, and Stevenson said that list is growing. But you don't have to go out to enjoy the perfect cocktail. Vault Ice is now available at some Norman liquor stores, as well, for about \$1 a cube. A single cube, Stevenson said, is usually good for two to three pours in an evening.

For commercial restaurants, it's good for a lot more than that.

"If you want to get your best drink experience that the distiller intended, beyond a neat shot, you want to go with our ice," Stevenson said. "Customers notice the difference and they come back."

Vault Ice is currently the largest producer of specialty cocktail ice in the country, producing 36,300-pound blocks of ice every three days. With four slabs per block, and 136 cubes per slab, that's over 40,000 crystal-clear cubes per week.

The company distributes its products to six states, through major companies like Sysco, Ben E. Keith, U.S. Foods and Gordon Food Service. It also has extended reach through restaurant chains.

WORLD

Heavy rain falls on protesters in Hong Kong march

By KELVIN CHAN
AND YANAN WANG
Associated Press

HONG KONG — Heavy rain fell on tens of thousands of umbrella-toting protesters Sunday as they marched from a packed park and filled a major road in Hong Kong, where mass pro-democracy demonstrations have become a regular weekend activity this summer.

Organizers said they hoped the assembly would be peaceful, which would make for a rare calm weekend in a monthslong movement that has been marked by violent clashes with police. Law enforcement officers were

keeping a low profile on Sunday, with no riot police seen from the procession's main routes.

"We hope that there will not be any chaotic situations today," said organizer Bonnie Leung. "We hope we can show the world that Hong Kong people can be totally peaceful."

Leung's group, the Civil Human Rights Front, has organized three massive marches in Hong Kong since June. The protest movement, however, has been increasingly marked by clashes with police as demonstrators vent their frustrations over what they perceive to be the government's blatant refusal to respond to their demands.



VINCENT THIAN/AP

Protesters march in the rain in Hong Kong on Sunday as they marched from a packed park and filled a major road.

"Peace is the No. 1 priority today," said Kiki Ma, 28, an accountant participating in the march. "We want to show that we aren't like the government."

While police had granted approval for the rally, they didn't approve an accompanying march. Demonstrators, nevertheless, fanned out and filled the streets as there was not enough space at the designated assembly area.

Public transit trains did not stop at stations near the assembly because of overcrowding.

In Beijing, You Wenzhe, a spokes-

man for China's ceremonial legislature, condemned statements from U.S. lawmakers supportive of Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement.

He called the lawmakers' comments "a gross violation of the spirit of the rule of law, a blatant double standard and a gross interference in China's internal affairs."

He said that Hong Kong's 7.5 million people and the Chinese population as a whole rejected the actions of a "very small group of violent protesters," as well as "any interference of foreign forces."

Wildfire forces 2K to evacuate Canary Islands

MADRID — Authorities on Spain's Canary Islands said about 2,000 people have been evacuated due to a wildfire that has ravaged more than 1,235 acres since it broke out less than 24 hours ago.

At least 250 firefighters, nine helicopters and two planes were working Sunday to tackle the flames near the town of Vallesco, on Gran Canaria island in the Atlantic Ocean archipelago, the provincial government said in tweets.

Officials said the blaze "has great potential" to spread and have ordered evacuations in at least six towns.

The island suffered another ravaging fire last week.

Mudslide in Kashmir kills 7 family members

MUZAFFARABAD, Pakistan

Pakistani police said a mudslide after heavy rains killed seven members of a single family, including five children, in Pakistani-administered Kashmir.

Police official Raja Zulqarnain said on Sunday that the seven died when their house collapsed the previous day in the village of Ajsara. Two other village homes were damaged. The village lies near the militarized Line of Control in the district of Rawla Kot.

Zulqarnain said rescue teams, with the help of villagers, retrieved the bodies of those killed.

Sudanese protesters sign deal with army

CAIRO — Sudan's pro-democracy movement and ruling military council signed a final power-sharing agreement Saturday at a ceremony in the capital, Khartoum, after weeks of tortuous negotiations.

The historic deal paves the way for a transition to a civilian-led government after the military overthrow of President Omar al-Bashir months ago and the more recent deadly suppression of protests.

Earlier this month, the two sides initiated a constitutional document in the wake of international pressure and amid growing concerns that the political crisis that followed al-Bashir's ouster could ignite civil war.

Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, head of the military council, called the signing a "victorious and historic day for our nation."

Plane lands on Croatian highway in emergency

ZAGREB, Croatia — A small plane made an emergency landing Saturday on a main highway in Croatia after its engine failed, surprising drivers but causing no injuries.

The incident happened on the highway connecting the capital, Zagreb, with the northern Adriatic port of Rijeka. It is one of the main roads in the country and is usually crowded during the tourist season and on weekends.

Local firefighters cited a "technical malfunction" on the plane as the reason for the landing.

From The Associated Press

Mexico City assesses monument damage after protest

By AMY GUTHRIE
Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — Workers erected a wooden wall around Mexico City's iconic Angel of Independence monument Saturday after feminists defaced it with graffiti during a raucous and violent protest over a string of alleged rapes by police.

The disorder Friday night erupted as part of protests that arose last week over a perception that city officials were not adequately investigating the rape accusations. Both victims were teenagers. The demonstrations have become known as the "glitter protests" after marchers showed the city's police chief in pink glitter.

Hundreds of city workers spent the wee hours of the morning pressure-cleaning and painting over graffiti.

The deputy director of artistic patrimony at the National Fine Arts Institute, Dolores Martinez, said at the base of the statue that officials were assessing the dam-

age to the Angel and other points in the capital that protesters attacked.

At the same time, Martinez added, the fine arts institute "respects freedom of speech and offers support for actions to eradicate all forms of violence against women."

Protesters wrote phrases like, "They don't take care of us" and "rape state" in lime green, purple and black spray paint across the base of the Angel monument, which commemorates Mexico's independence from Spain and is often the site of celebrations by city residents.

Demonstrators also painted the word "rapists" on the wall of a nearby police station and trashed a major bus station. A male television reporter was assaulted by another man while covering the protest.

Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum, the first woman elected to head the city's government, said via Twitter that the attorney general's office of the metropolis will investigate and

bring charges against those who attacked journalists.

Violence against women is a serious problem in Mexico.

Human Rights Watch says Mexican laws "do not adequately protect women and girls against domestic and sexual violence." It said in a 2019 report that provisions in Mexican law, including those that make the severity of punishments for sexual offenses contingent upon the supposed chastity of the victim, "contradict international standards."

Mexico City's culture minister, Jose Alfonso Suarez del Real, expressed sadness over the vandalism at the Angel monument, saying it "belongs to the Mexican people, not to the state."

The remains of 14 independence heroes rest within the monument, including those of a woman, Leona Vicario.

The monument on Reforma Avenue is a reunion point for protests as well as celebrations. Soccer fans regularly converge around the base to celebrate their teams' wins, for example.



AMY GUTHRIE/AP

Graffiti covers Mexico City's iconic Angel of Independence after protesters defaced it Friday night during a raucous protest.

French police suicide rate climbs; government flummoxed

By ELAINE GANLEY
Associated Press

PARIS — Three riot police officers, a police commander, a police academy teacher — all are among eight French police officers who have killed themselves recently. That makes 64 suicides so far this year — and the number just keeps on climbing.

Deaths by suicide for French police now outnumber deaths in the line of duty. The protec-

tors need protecting, say police unions, which are demanding more help to stop the problem.

Those who choose to end their lives are from everywhere in France and of all ages, many with young children. The latest death came Wednesday in the Ardeche region in southeast France. Why they step across what one police union calls the "thin blue line" remains a question that French authorities have so far been unable to answer.

A parliamentary inquiry made public in July lists a multitude of reasons for the stress and despair among French police, including overwork since a series of terrorist attacks that started in January 2015 and the weekly, often extremely violent, anti-government protests since November by the yellow vest movement seeking more economic and social justice. It does not single out any one reason.

"Given the situation today, 2019

could be the worst in the last 30 years," said Denis Jacob, head of the Alternative Police CPDT union.

A Senate report last year said the French police suicide rate was 36% higher than the rate for France's general population, but also uncovered no single reason behind the suicides.

"We don't have an understanding" of why, Interior Minister Christophe Castaner conceded in April.

WORLD

Iceland and curfews, hangouts cut teen drinking

By EGILL BJARNASON
Associated Press

REYKJAVIK, Iceland — The clock strikes 10 p.m. on a Friday when the “Parent Patrol” enters a popular playground in suburban Reykjavik. The teens turn down the music and reach for their phones to check the time: It’s ticking into curfew.

Every weekend, parents all over the Icelandic capital embark on a two-hour evening walk around their neighborhood, checking on youth hangouts.

The walk is one step toward Iceland’s success into turning around a crisis in teenage drinking. Focusing on local participation and promoting more music and sports options for students, the island nation in the North Atlantic has dried up a teenage culture of drinking and smoking. Icelandic teens now have one of the lowest rates of substance abuse in Europe.

Other countries are taking notice. The Icelandic Centre for Social Research and Analysis, the institute pioneering the project for the past two decades, says it currently advises 100 communities in 23 countries, from Finland to Chile, on cutting teen substance abuse.

“The key to success is to create healthy communities and by that get healthy individuals,” said Inga Dora Sigfusdottir, a sociology professor who founded the “Youth of the World” program, which now has rebranded as “Planet Youth.”

The secret, she says, is to keep young people busy and parents engaged without talking much about drugs or alcohol.

That stands in sharp contrast to other anti-abuse programs, which try to sway teenagers with school lectures and scary, disgusting ads showing smokers’ rotten lungs or eggs in a frying pan to represent an intoxicated brain.

“Telling teenagers not to use drugs can backlash and actually get them curious to try them,” Sigfusdottir said.

In 1999, when thousands of teenagers would gather in downtown Reykjavik every weekend, surveys showed 56% of Icelandic 16-year-olds drank alcohol and about as many had tried smoking. Years later, Iceland has the lowest rates for drinking and smoking among the 35 countries measured in the 2015 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs.

On average, 80% of European 16-year-olds have tasted alcohol at least once, compared with 35% in Iceland, the only country where more than half of those students completely abstains from alcohol. Denmark — another wealthy Nordic country — has the highest rates of teen drinking, along with Greece, Hungary and the Czech Republic, where 92% to 96% have consumed alcohol.

In the U.S., teen drinking is a significant health concern, because many U.S. teens are driving cars and don’t have access to good public transportation like



PHOTOS BY EGILL BJARNASON/AP

Teenagers hang out at the Tjornin youth center in Reykjavik, Iceland. The island nation turned around a crisis of youth drinking by offering more music and sports options for students.

teens in Europe. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control reports that while U.S. high school drinking has declined substantially in the last 20 years to 32.8% in 2015, 17.7% of U.S. high school students still binge drink at least once a month. The CDC also reports that excessive drinking accounts for around 4,300 deaths a year in the U.S. among people under 21.

Reykjavik Mayor Dagur B. Eggertsson said the Icelandic plan “is all about society giving better options” for teens than substance abuse. He believes the wide variety of opportunities that now keep students busy and inspired has dramatically altered the country’s youth culture.

Yet better options cost money. Local municipalities like Reykjavik have invested in sport halls, music schools and youth centers. To make the programs widely available, parents are offered a \$500 annual voucher toward sports or music programs for their children.

As a teen, Eggertsson remembers taking the bus downtown on weekend nights to “wander the streets of Reykjavik (without really going anywhere).”

“I remember watching a friend puke behind a police station and fishing another one from the harbor after falling in,” the 46-year-old father of four told The Associated Press. “What was socially acceptable then would now be a scandalous headline in the paper.”

Today’s news articles about teenagers have a different tone: Anxiety and symptoms of depression have never been higher, particularly among girls, where the rate has doubled in the past ten years. Vaping has replaced tobacco use, with about 40% of Icelandic 16-year-olds having tried the electronic cigarettes.

Researchers say the “Planet Youth” prevention model is evolving constantly because it is based on annual surveys to detect trends and measure policy effectiveness.

The group of parents patrolling the Korar neighborhood — a lawyer, an advertising agent and a diplomat, among others — walk across empty parking lots to pass by known teenage hangouts.

By law — introduced when Icelandic police routinely dealt with alcohol-fueled street gatherings — children under 12 are not allowed to be outside after 8 p.m. without parents and those 13 to 16 not past 10 p.m. Over summer, when school is out, the curfew is extended by two hours.

“We tell the kids if they are out too late, polite and nice, and then they go home,” said Heidar Atlason, a veteran member of the patrol.

Over Iceland’s harsh winter, the one parent admits, evenings sometimes pass without running into any students. Modern teens meet online rather than outside.



Above: A group who are part of the “Parent Patrol” in the Korar neighborhood check out usual youth hangout spots on June 15.



Left: Karen Guttensson and Ingvar Ingolfsson, right, both 14 years old, outside the Tjornin youth center on May 13 on a bright summer night.

SCIENCE

Climate change still threatens key US river after wet winter

By FELICIA FONSECA

Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — Snow piled up in the mountains across the U.S. West last winter, leaving enough to thrill skiers into the summer, swelling rivers and streams when it melted and largely making wildfire restrictions unnecessary. But the wet weather can be misleading.

Climate change means the region is still getting drier and hotter.

"It only demonstrates the wide swings we have to manage going forward," James Eklund, former director of the Upper Colorado River Commission, an interstate agency that ensures river water is doled out properly, said earlier this year. "You can put an ice cube — even an excellent ice cube — in a cup of hot coffee, but eventually it's going to disappear."

For the seven states relying on the Colorado River, which carries melted snow from the Rocky Mountains to the Gulf of California, that means a future with increasingly less water for farms and cities.

Climate scientists say it's hard to predict how much less. The river supplies 40 million people in Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming, as well as a \$5 billion-a-year agricultural industry.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

said Thursday that Lake Mead, a key reservoir on the Colorado River, has enough water to avoid mandatory cuts to users next year. But it will still be low enough that Nevada, Arizona and Mexico will make voluntary reductions, which they agreed to earlier this year under a drought contingency plan.

Here is a look at the Colorado River amid climate change:

■ **Colorado River flow:** Much of the water in the Colorado River and its tributaries originates as snow. As temperatures rise and demand grows, the water supply declines. Even if more snow and rain fell, it wouldn't necessarily all end up in the river. Plants will suck up more water, and it will evaporate quicker.

Brad Udall, a water and climate research scientist at Colorado State University, said the river's flow could decrease even further, to 20% by 2050 and 35% by 2100.

"On any given day, it's hotter, we have more days for a growing season to occur, we have a thirstier atmosphere," he said. "When you put all those things together, you lose flow in the river."

■ **Climate change:** Climate change doesn't mean the American West will be hot and dry all the time. Extreme swings in weather are expected as part of a changing climate — something Udall has called "weather whiplash."

The Southwest got a reprieve this year with average and above-average snowfall following a year that sent many states into extreme drought. Nearly empty reservoirs quickly rose, including Lake Mead and Lake Powell — the largest man-made reservoirs in the country that hold Colorado River water.

The lakes still are far below capacity, steadily declining since 2000 with a bigger spike after winter 2011.

A wet year interrupting years of dryness isn't uncommon.

"We're very thankful for this gain in wet hydrology and storage in the reservoirs that happened this year, but we know we can lose it just as fast," said Carly Jerla, with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

■ **Drought:** Many states declared an end to short-term drought this year, based on the U.S. Drought Monitor, which looks at land conditions.

The map is produced by the National Drought Migration Center, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

But not all agencies use the same indicators for drought.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation uses Lake Mead on the Nevada-Arizona border and Lake Powell on the Arizona-Utah border. The reservoirs were nearly full in 1999 before the agency



RICHARD VOGEL/AP

The water level of the Colorado River can be seen from the Hoover Dam, Ariz., in March.

declared a drought the following year that hasn't let up. As of Aug. 12, Lake Powell was 57% full and Lake Mead was 39% full.

Jerla said the bureau won't say the drought is over until those reservoirs fill completely, which won't happen without consecutive years of wet weather.

■ **Protecting the river:** The seven states that rely on the Colorado River signed a plan earlier this year to protect the waterway from climate change and keep Lake Mead and Lake Powell fuller.

The drought contingency plan is meant to keep the reservoirs from dropping so low that they cannot deliver water or produce hydropower amid prolonged drought and climate change.

In a Bureau of Reclamation

report released Thursday, Lake Mead was projected to be slightly below 1,090 feet above sea level on Jan. 1. With the lake at that level, the drought contingency plan calls on Mexico to leave 3% of its normal share of water in the reservoir, the agency said.

Arizona agreed to leave 7%, and Nevada 3% under the plan. But Nevada is already using less than its share and likely won't feel much of an effect, said Terry Fulp of the Bureau of Reclamation.

If Lake Mead drops to 1,075 feet above sea level, Arizona and Nevada would face bigger, mandatory cuts.

The drought contingency plan expires in 2026, and the states will begin negotiating new guidelines next year.

NASA scientists fly over Greenland to track melting ice

By SETH BORENSTEIN

Associated Press

ABOARD A NASA RESEARCH PLANE OVER GREENLAND — The fields of rippling ice 500 feet below the NASA plane give way to the blue-green of water dotted with irregular chunks of bleached-white ice, some the size of battleships, some as tall as 15-story buildings.

Like nearly every other glacier on Greenland, the massive Kangerlussuaq is melting. In fact, the giant frozen island has seen one of its biggest melts on record this year. NASA scientist Josh Willis is now closely studying the phenomenon in hopes of figuring out precisely how global warming is eating away at Greenland's ice.

Specifically, he wants to know whether the melting is being caused more by warm air or warm seawater. The answer could be crucial to Earth's future.

Water brings more heat to something frozen faster than air does, as anyone who has ever defrosted a steak under the faucet knows.

If Willis' theory that much of the damage is from the water turns out to be correct, he said, "there's a lot higher potential for Greenland to melt more quickly than we thought." And that means seas rising faster and coastal communities being inundated more.

Greenland contains enough ice to make world sea levels rise by 20 feet if it were all to melt in a single day this month. It lost a record 13.7 trillion tons, by one estimate.



FELIPE DANA/AP

A boat navigates at night between icebergs in eastern Greenland late Friday.

"It's a little scary," Willis said as looked down on an area filled with more water than ice. "We're definitely watching the ice sheet disappear in front of us."

Climate change is eating away at Greenland's glaciers in two ways. The most obvious way is from the warm air above, which has been brutal this summer, with a European heat wave in July working like a hair dryer on the ice. The other way is from warm, salty water, some of it from North America's Gulf Stream, nibbling at coastal glaciers from below.

When University of Georgia ice scientist Tom Mote, who isn't part of this project, started studying Greenland's glaciers in

the early 1990s, researchers really didn't think the water was a big factor.

Willis' project — called Oceans Melting Greenland, or OMG — is showing that it is. Now the question is how much and how fast.

What Willis is measuring is the water 660 feet or more below the surface, which is warmer and saltier than the stuff that touches the air. It's this deep water that does the major damage.

To measure this, NASA is spending five years circling the island in a tricked-out, 77-year-old DC-3 built for World War II. Willis, project manager Ian McCubbin and mechanic Rich Gill drop long, cylin-

drial probes through a special tube in the floor of the plane, watching as the sensors parachute down and then dive into the chilly water.

McCubbin then waits for a tone on his computer that tells him the probe is underwater and measuring temperature and salinity. When all of the flight's five probes start signaling — with a sound McCubbin likens to "a fax machine or an AOL modem" — he and Willis high-five.

Meanwhile, pilots Andy Ferguson and Don Watrous bank the plane toward the blue-green spots, looking for the next target and pointing out stunning giant icebergs and signs of glacial retreat over the radio.

As the data is radioed back from one \$2,000 probe now deep in the water near Kangerlussuaq, in eastern Greenland, it initially looks like the temperature hasn't changed much over the last year or two, which could be good news. But that's just one data point. Each year for the past four years, NASA has been looking at all of Greenland, and the numbers overall haven't been quite as comforting.

If the water is playing a much bigger role than scientists thought, it could mean seas will be rising faster and higher than expected. That's because 90% of the heat energy from climate change goes into the oceans, Willis said. Warm water provides "a bigger bang for the buck" than air when it comes to melting ice, Willis said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Thieves steal 90 panels from solar farm

IN HENRYVILLE — A solar power generating farm in southern Indiana was disrupted when about 90 panels were stolen.

Hoosier Energy said the theft from the Henryville Solar facility in Clark County was spotted Wednesday and reported to police.

The Bloomington-based company said the stolen industrial panels have little resale value and aren't useable for residential solar power. The solar farm near Louisville, Ky., has more than 4,100 panels. The company said electricity to customers wasn't disrupted.

Company spokesman Greg Seiter said whoever stole the panels risked electrocution in the high-voltage area.

Clark County Sheriff's Col. Scottie Maples suspects multiple people took part in stealing the equipment valued at about \$20,000.

Man who let python escape misses hearing

WV MORGANTOWN — The man accused of letting his 15-foot python escape into the woods outside Morgantown did not show up for his initial court date on Wednesday.

The Dominion Post reported the judge scheduled another hearing for Shane Stevens in September. He is charged with allowing an animal to run at large, which carries a \$500 fine.

Authorities said Stevens was transporting his pet snake in a truck on May 30 when it escaped its cage.

A search party that included a drone aircraft could not find the python and officials have since called off the hunt. Stevens told officers the snake is dangerous.

Municipal Judge Stephen Higgins said on Wednesday if Stevens does not show up for his next hearing, a warrant will be issued for his arrest.

Salmon cannon to offer upstream fish detour

WA SPOKANE — A fish-propelling tube could restore salmon populations to portions of a Washington river that has not seen the species in 90 years.

The Spokesman-Review reported Friday that if the salmon cannon is approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, it could restore populations to native waters in the Upper Columbia.

Officials said the system is expected to give fish a detour to avoid dams when traveling upstream to reproduce.

Wildlife experts said dams and other factors threaten salmon, and the cannon can serve as a safe alternative during the journey.

Officials said Bellevue-based Whooshh Innovations created the tube that can cost up to \$4 million. Experts said the system does not cause harm to the fish and can redirect predatory and invasive species to other portions of the river.



RUSS DILLINGHAM, (LEWISTON, MAINE) SUN JOURNAL/AP

Lighting the fire within

Neon Dreamz pilot Patrick Grogan of North Carolina fires up his balloon at Simard-Payne Memorial Park in Lewiston, Maine, on Saturday, during the Great Falls Balloon Festival.

Crews reopen Denali park road, buses return

AK DENALI NATIONAL PARK — Road crews have cleared one lane in Denali National Park and Preserve, and buses are beginning to return about 300 stranded tourists back to the park entrance.

The tourists became stranded Friday after heavy rains triggered mudslides and caused excess water from a culvert to damage a road.

Park spokesman Paul Ollig said that all the stranded passengers are expected back at the park entrance Friday night, but he didn't have an exact time of when they would arrive.

Earlier Friday, Denali's superintendent closed Denali Park Road to all traffic at mile 30. The road is the only one inside the vast park.

Similar debris flows led to day-long traffic restrictions last week. Continued heavy rains since kept the road and surrounding tundra saturated with water.

Also on Friday, the Alaska Railroad said it has halted service north of the park due to the failure of retaining wall caused by high water in the Nenana River.

Passenger and freight service will be suspended through the area until late Monday at the earliest, the railroad said in a statement.

THE CENSUS

45

least a year before replacing them.

The percentage of people who said they had worn the same pair of underwear for two of more consecutive days, according to a survey by underwear maker Tommy John. The results were split fairly evenly between men and women. It also said that 46% of respondents kept their underwear for at

Police: Food workers assaulted over mistake

TN NASHVILLE — Authorities said they were acting on intelligence when they seized more than 60 guns from a home on the city's West Side.

Police Lt. Jeff Schaaf said Friday officers served a search warrant late Thursday at the home in the Lawndale neighborhood. He said investigators believe the two people arrested during the raid were selling weapons out of the home.

Schaaf said among the weapons seized were handguns, semiautomatic handguns, AK-47s and revolvers. Officers also found "numerous" extended magazines.

Authorities said a police tactical team had the home under surveillance before the raid, in order to safely serve the warrant amid the firepower. Chicago police Capt. Gilbert Calderon said the department is talking with federal prosecutors as well as local prosecutors about charges.

It's unclear whether McGlowan or Owens have attorneys who could comment on their behalf.

Police recover 60 guns during raid in Chicago

IL CHICAGO — Police officers said they were acting on intelligence when they seized more than 60 guns from a home on the city's West Side.

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Vacation home invaded by vomiting vultures

FL WEST PALM BEACH — A New York couple's Florida vacation home has been taken over by dozens of black vultures that are vomiting and defecating everywhere.

The Palm Beach Post reported the Casimano family can't even visit the \$702,000 home they purchased earlier this year in the This Golf and Country Club.

Siobhan Casimano describes the smell as "like a thousand rotting corpses," and said vultures have destroyed their screened enclosures, overtaken the pool and defecated with their beaks.

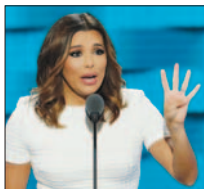
Sheriff: Misleading gas jug thwarts thieves

KY KEAVY — Authorities said three thieves thought they were stealing gasoline from a property for their broken down car until the car stopped working again.

Laurel County Sheriff's Office on Facebook said the three stole a 5-gallon gasoline jug from a garage for their car. Except there wasn't gasoline in the jug. It was peroxide. News outlets report Latasha Bryant, Timothy Storms and Dustin Napier were arrested.

From wire reports

FACES



AP

Eva Longoria is part of a group that published an open letter of solidarity to U.S. Latinos after the El Paso, Texas, shooting and the recent immigration raids.

Coalition of Latinos pens 'letter of solidarity'

Associated Press

America Ferrera and Eva Longoria are leading a coalition of actors, writers and leaders in penning a public "letter of solidarity" to U.S. Latinos in the wake of the mass shooting in El Paso, Texas, and an immigration raid in Mississippi.

The letter, published Aug. 16 in *The New York Times* and in a handful of Spanish-language newspapers, says the signers stand with U.S. Latinos who may feel "terrified, heartbroken and defeated by the barrage of attacks." It says such "indignities and cruelty" won't diminish the contributions Latinos have made to the U.S., and urges Hispanics to keep standing up to bigotry.

Latinos across the country have expressed anxiety after the El Paso shooting and another in Gilroy, Calif., claimed Hispanic victims.

Other news

■ Michael Madsen has pleaded no contest to misdemeanor drunken driving after crashing his SUV into a pole in Malibu, Calif., in March. In an agreement with prosecutors, the "Reservoir Dogs" actor entered the plea to one count of driving with .08% blood alcohol content within 10 years of another DUI offense. He was sentenced Aug. 15 to four days in jail and five years' probation. No one was injured when Madsen was driving a Toyota Land Rover that ran into a pole on March 24. Madsen, 61, is best known for playing gun-toting tough guys in the films of director Quentin Tarantino.

■ Metallica said it donated \$277,600 to support the construction of Romania's first pediatric oncology hospital. The heavy metal band, which is very popular in Romania, made the donation ahead of its sold-out show Aug. 13 in Romania's National Arena. The construction of the hospital began in 2018 and is expected to be completed in 2020. Few hospitals have been built in Romania since the 1989 fall of communism, a situation most blame on endemic government corruption.

Q&A

'Fans are gonna like it, or they're not

Brian Austin Green and the other cast members of "BH90210" play exaggerated versions of themselves.

Green says he would have skipped straight '90210' reboot

By ALICIA RANCILLO
Associated Press

Brian Austin Green says if *Tori Spelling*, *Jennie Garth* and the other creators of "BH90210," had approached him with a standard reboot of the '90s drama, he would've said no.

"I played David Silver for 10 years and that was enough for me, and they told me this idea and I liked the fact that I could also play this new character that I created and got to have fun with," Green said.

In the six episodes of "BH90210," the cast plays exaggerated versions of themselves as they come together to reboot "Beverly Hills, 90210."

"I think the idea is amazing," Green said. "I figured it would be fun and it was one of those things where either the fans are gonna like it, or they're not. And we can't make the show just based purely on what they want because if all they want is a straight reboot, the cast isn't gonna give them that."

Luke Perry, a member of the original cast, died in March after a massive stroke.

In a recent interview, Green talked about reteaming with his co-stars after nearly two decades.

AP: "BH90210" pokes fun at tabloid stories or stereotypes about your real lives — like *Tori Spelling* has debt issues and *films* multiple reality shows and *Jennie Garth* has had failed marriages. Did that appeal to you?

Green: It was really important to come

up with the right character stuff where we could do that. Like, for me, being married, obviously my wife (actress Megan Fox) and I have a lot of paparazzi stuff and tabloid stuff. So it was about for me coming up with a character where we could still have fun and people wouldn't look at it and compare the two. They wouldn't think like, 'Oh, well is this something that Brian and Megan are really dealing with?' It gave us freedom to have fun and joke around and have fun with it, but I think everybody's done a real good job of finding the things they think are funny and then finding the things that come from either real stories that they've had or things they've imagined could happen.

What's it like reuniting with these people professionally that you worked with from when you were age 17 to 27?

We have an amazing sort of chemistry with each other because we've done the show for as long as we have, but at the same time we have sort of a new chemistry and a new bond that forms because we have so much more in common now than we did before. So, like Jay (Jason Priestly) and I can talk about being married and having kids and I can do that with a lot of the people and so you have the sort of memories of you jump right back in with like, oh this is what it was like to be around this person or that person. You have that, but you have so much more now to connect about than we did before.

Shannen Doherty signed on to the show later than the rest of you. Are you glad she decided to join?

"To me, the show only worked if it was

the original cast doing it and she was a huge part in what made the show what it was and so was Luke (Perry). You know, I always had this hope of, I knew he was busy doing 'Riverdale' and that he wasn't gonna be able to sign on and do the reboot, but I always had in the back of my mind that he would be able to come and at least do one and I always hoped, if nothing else that it would work out that way with Shan (Doherty) too where she would come and do one or two. So, it was really nice that she ended up signing on and doing all six. I think she was a big part of the show then and she's a big part of the show now."

The first episode had a few moments that were tributes to Luke. Was it hard to decide how exactly to do that?

Everyone mourns in their own way. Some people talk about it more than others, some people post about it, some people don't. That's such an individual process mourning the loss of somebody. How do you really deal with that on a television show? You can't. You pay homage to it and you show respect for it in a way where you don't feel you're being disrespectful. It's something where we as a cast and as a people, we toed that line very carefully. It's a really fine line for us.

And it must be very strange to mourn with the world watching.

The public eye has changed so much. Back when we did the show, there was no social media so the world has changed, the climate has changed. It's weird to update the mourning for the climate that exists now.



CHRISTOPHER SMITH, INVISION/AP

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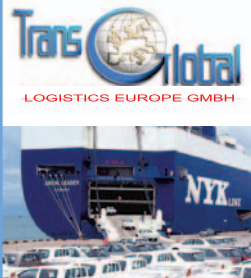
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OPINION

Payday lenders still getting favorable terms

By DAVID LAZARUS

Los Angeles Times

Something very important, affecting millions of consumers, won't happen Monday.

That's when new protections from abusive payday and car-title lenders were set to take effect, requiring the firms to make sure borrowers can pay back their obligations in a reasonable amount of time and not become mired in debt.

However, the Trump administration is delaying this perfectly reasonable safeguard for another 15 months, and already has declared its intention to do away with the rules entirely amid concern they're too troublesome for lenders.

This is the latest example of President Donald Trump undermining or eliminating consumer-friendly policies initiated by his predecessor, Barack Obama, for no better reason than because industry players demanded a lighter touch.

"Despite years of evidence about the harms of payday and car-title loans, the new leadership at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has decided to favor the lenders," said Lauren Saunders, associate director of the National Consumer Law Center.

"They don't care that these loans result in people getting caught in debt traps that can last for months and months," she told me.

The CFPB passed the new rules in 2017 and gave the \$50-billion short-term loan industry nearly two years to prepare for the changes.

"Too often, borrowers who need quick cash end up trapped in loans they can't afford," former bureau Director Richard Cordray, an Obama appointee, said at the time. "The rules' common sense ability-to-repay protections prevent lenders from succeeding by setting up borrowers to fail."

Let's say you borrow \$400. You'd be obligated to repay the loan within two weeks, plus \$60 in interest and fees — the equivalent of an annual percentage rate of more than 300%.

If the loan can't be repaid — and all too often it can't for people living paycheck to paycheck — your obligation would get rolled over into a new loan, resulting in an ongoing burden of high-interest debt.

In a 2014 report, the CFPB found that

over 80% of payday loans ended up being rolled over into new loans or followed within days by a new loan. Half of all payday loans resulted in 10 additional loans to pay off the original debt.

Car-title loans can be even more troublesome. Like payday loans, they're a way to get fast cash when needed. Unlike payday loans, you're putting up your vehicle as collateral. Not only do title loans come with exorbitant interest rates, but if you fall behind on payments, you can lose your car.

Rebecca Borné, senior policy counsel with the Center for Responsible Lending, said about 20% of car-title loan recipients end up having their vehicles taken and sold off by lenders.

"It's just shocking," she said. "These loans have a truly crushing impact on so many families."

Things were supposed to improve as of Monday. Under the new rules, lenders would have to conduct a "full-payment test" — meaning they'd have to determine up front that a borrower has the financial means to repay the loan without taking out another loan. Moreover, if a borrower takes out three payday loans in "quick succession," lenders would have to cut them off for 30 days. Lenders also would be prohibited from placing borrowers in debt for more than 90 days in any 12-month period.

"Requiring affordable loans that a borrower can pay back without taking out another loan would have protected millions of people who are typically caught by lenders in high-cost debt traps," said Christine Hines, legislative director for the National Association of Consumer Advocates.

"The new CFPB leadership does not want to give the rules a chance to work," she said.

The short-term loan industry went into Chicken Little mode as soon as the new rules were announced a few years ago, arguing that the requirements would put thousands of lenders out of business.

That means, of course, the industry was acknowledging its business model depends on ensnaring consumers in endless debt. In a normal world, that would be sufficient justification to proceed with the new protections.

But we are not in a normal world. To Trump, the industry's complaints were its new sign of government overreach. His surely business-friendly CFPB announced

earlier this year that requiring short-term lenders to perform due diligence on borrowers "would impose substantial burdens on industry" and make it harder for people to access credit.

To be sure, it's important that people have access to emergency funds in a pinch. Banks, credit unions, government agencies — each can play a role in addressing such needs.

Payday and car-title loans are not that financial safety net. They're black holes that can pull in the desperate or unwary, then bleed them of all available resources.

The Community Financial Services Association of America, a trade group representing short-term lenders, told me in a statement that it's pleased to see a halt to the CFPB's "flawed" and "misguided" regulation.

"The bureau's rule ... was crafted on a pre-determined, partisan agenda," it said, adding that the CFPB "failed to demonstrate consumer harm from small-dollar loans, ignored unbiased research and data, and relied on flawed information to support its rulemaking."

Which is true, if you disregard those pesky facts about people being stuck for months or even years paying back a loan, or losing their car because the interest rates were so high.

Several years ago, Congress had to pass a law capping interest rates on loans charged to members of the military. It makes you wonder why civilians should be treated differently.

It also makes you wonder why short-term lenders currently enjoy so much influence in Washington.

In 2016, the year Trump was elected president, payday lenders contributed \$2.8 million to political causes, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. Of that total, 81% went to Republicans.

In the 2018 election cycle, payday lenders contributed \$2.5 million. Eighty-nine percent went to Republicans.

Last year, the payday lending industry for the first time held its annual convention at the Trump National Doral Miami resort.

Payday lenders returned to the Trump-owned hotel for this year's event. There was much to celebrate.

David Lazarus is a Los Angeles Times business and consumer columnist.

Attend to solutions so babies aren't left in hot cars

A Washington Post editorial

You're a single working parent, or a stay-at-home dad, or a grandmother assigned to babysit for type-A, rich or poor or somewhere in between. Regardless of wealth, gender, age, occupation, ethnicity or any other demographic marker, it could be you. Though you don't believe so, until it's too late.

It's easy to watch the news and be certain that only an utterly heartless, totally incompetent parent could unintentionally leave a child in a car on a warm morning. But memory is fickle, and the neurological lapse that can cause a caregiver to forget about a child in the back seat of a vehicle is indiscriminate. To entertain this delusion is to hide from the facts: Eight-hundred and twenty-nine children have died in hot cars from 1998 to 2019, and more than half of those deaths have been accidental, according to the National Safety Council. A change in routine, a particularly stressful morning or even a distracting phone call can lead to this fatal slip. In the caregiver's mind, the child is happy and taken care of,

safely dropped off at day care or wherever else they might normally be.

Last month in New York, Juan Rodriguez, a father of four, dropped off his twin babies at day care and drove to his eight-hour shift at a hospital in the Bronx. Like so many other devastated parents, he realized only after work that his overworked brain had imagined the drop-off. In the meantime, his youngest two children died in the back seat of his car, still buckled into their car seats. Since that day, nine other children have died from heat-related causes in the back seats of cars, bringing this year's total to more than 30.

This is not a new problem, and people have been pushing for technological solutions since at least 2000, when NASA designed a weight-based alert system connected to a keychain alarm. Automakers Hyundai and Kia have integrated motion sensors into their vehicles' second and third rows to detect children and pets. Lawmakers have proposed bills, most recently the bipartisan Hot Car Act of 2019, to require built-in auditory alert systems. Smaller innovations, such as car-seat weight sensors

and "smart" clip-on systems, also could help.

All of these solutions have struggled to gain footing, in part, because no parent believes he or she will make this fatal mistake. Acknowledgment and acceptance of the risk would go a long way toward reducing the number of these tragic occurrences. But car companies shouldn't wait to implement lifesaving technology. Companies and caregivers alike need to accept the reality of this problem: This is an accident that nobody is immune to. Just as child-proofing your house does not suggest you might one day drop or hurt your baby, adding safety measures to your vehicle and baby car seats does not mean you are a negligent parent. In fact, it suggests the opposite.

Because a child's body heats up faster than an adult's and because cars trap heat, even mildly warm days can create life-threatening situations for children left unattended. As the effects of extreme climate change worsen and heat waves continue, addressing this is more important than ever.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Worried about a recession? Protect yourself, don't panic

By SARAH SKIDMORE SELL
Associated Press

If the threat of a recession gives you pause when it comes to your personal finances, remember now is a time to prepare, not panic.

Worries about the economy increased last week when a fairly reliable recession warning emerged from the bond market. But without a crystal ball, it remains unclear when a recession might hit. Still, financial experts say people should consider taking certain steps that are beneficial in any economy but would add households greatly in a downturn.

■ **Don't panic.** The long-standing advice remains—do not panic and stay the course on your financial plan.

It is sage advice, said Dan Keady, chief financial planning strategist at TIAA, but it also goes against the grain for many people. "It's hard just to do nothing," he said. "The best investment strategy is a long-term one. If you buy and sell your investments frequently, you'll more likely than not be hurt and sell based on emotion—panic or excitement."

If you simply cannot sit still, use this pressure as an impetus to check your plan. Are your goals the same? Are your investments allocated where you want them? It makes sense to periodically rebalance your portfolio to ensure your investments have not become too heavily weighted in one segment or another, particularly after a long stock market run-up like the one in recent years.

Say, for example, you started with 60% of your nest egg in stocks and 40% in bonds. The stock por-

"I definitely think that it has been long enough (since the last recession) that there are plenty of people who ... have forgotten some of the lessons we have learned in the past decade."

Lauren Anastasio
financial planner at SoFi

tion could have easily jumped to 70% thanks to strong gains in the technology sector. Whatever the portion of your portfolio is in stocks, remember that it can lose 10% or 20% of its value regularly as recessions come and go.

While it may be difficult, fight the urge to readjust your portfolio solely based on market conditions.

Try not to get too tied up in the ups and downs of the stock market too. Even those without money in the market—about half of all U.S. households—might be tempted to see the market's move as a sign of the times even though it can have little impact on their direct financial wealth.

And remember a recession is a natural part of a market cycle, said Lauren Anastasio, a certified financial planner at SoFi.

"The advice is don't panic," Anastasio said. "But that doesn't mean there aren't steps to be prepared for whatever is going to come."

■ **Save up.** One of the smartest moves anyone can make is to build up an emergency fund. These are a great idea at any time to help weather unexpected expenses, but can become critical in

a downturn.

A recession typically comes with job losses, and an emergency fund can be a lifeline for many families. Even those with good job security should take heed as everyone can feel an income pinch during a recession, as companies might eliminate bonuses, reduce overtime or slow pay increases, Anastasio noted.

Experts recommend having enough set aside to cover anywhere from three months to nine months of basic expenses. But nearly four in 10 Americans say they are not confident they would be able to pay an emergency expense of \$1,000, according to a recent survey by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

So, set aside whatever money you can and keep it in an account you can readily access. Even in this low interest rate environment, there are some savings accounts earning near or above 2%.

■ **Pay off debt.** It is important to pay off any high-interest debts, such as credit card balances.

Americans dramatically reduced their debts after the last recession, but those debt levels crept back up. This can be



RICHARD VOGEL/AP

Shoppers ride an escalator inside the Glendale Galleria in Glendale, Calif. If you're worried about a recession, financial experts say there are steps you can take to brace yourself for any downturn ahead.

costly as the average interest rate on a credit card is 17.82%, according to Bankrate. It hit a record at 17.86% last month.

Paying down those debts will not only reduce the amount paid over time, it also frees up available credit that may be needed in a pinch ahead. That is important as banks tend to tighten lending during recessionary periods, so it could be harder to get a loan or line of credit.

■ **Make good choices.** It should go without saying, but be judicious about big financial decisions.

Consider holding off on any big purchases like a car or home remodeling if it is a stretch, Anastasio suggested. If you are going to need cash in the next few years—say for the birth of a child, a sabbatical or a return to school—make sure you have that available and not tied up in something that may lose value.

"I definitely think that it has been long enough (since the last recession) that there are plenty of people who have gotten comfortable with the period of growth and expansion and have forgotten some of the lessons we have learned in the past decade," she said.

EXCHANGE RATES

| Military rates | |
|--|-----------------|
| Euro costs (Aug. 19) | \$1.1377 |
| Dollar buys (Aug. 19) | 69.879 |
| British pound (Aug. 19) | \$1.25 |
| Japanese yen (Aug. 19) | 104.00 |
| South Korean won (Aug. 19) | 1,184.00 |
| Commercial rates | |
| Bahrain (Dinar) | 0.3770 |
| British pound | \$1.2160 |
| Canada (Dollar) | 1.3305 |
| China (Yuan) | 7.0413 |
| Denmark (Krone) | 6.7329 |
| Egypt (Pound) | 16.5807 |
| Euro | \$1.1076/6.9028 |
| Hong Kong (Dollar) | 7.8425 |
| Hungary (Forint) | 293.51 |
| Israel (Shekel) | 3.5457 |
| Japan (Yen) | 106.22 |
| Kuwait (Dinar) | 0.3043 |
| Norway (Krone) | 9.0137 |
| Philippines (Peso) | 52.41 |
| Poland (Zloty) | 3.92 |
| Saudi Arabia (Riyal) | 3.7502 |
| Singapore (Dollar) | 1.3866 |
| South Korea (Won) | 1,208.67 |
| Switzerland (Franc) | 0.9795 |
| Thailand (Baht) | 30.93 |
| Turkey (Lira) | 6.5755 |
| (Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom or nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies rates one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.) | |

INTEREST RATES

| | |
|---------------------------|------|
| Prime rate | 5.25 |
| Discount rate | 2.75 |
| Federal funds market rate | 1.12 |
| 3-month bill | 1.83 |
| 30-year bond | 2.00 |

WEATHER OUTLOOK

MONDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



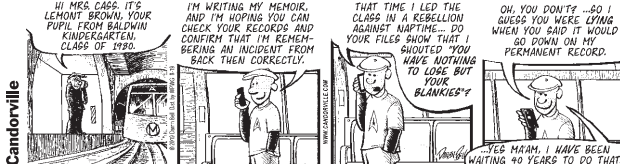
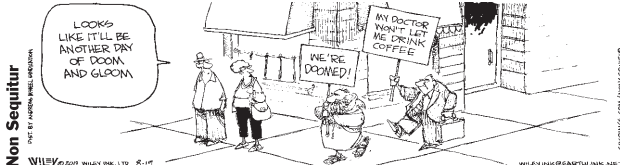
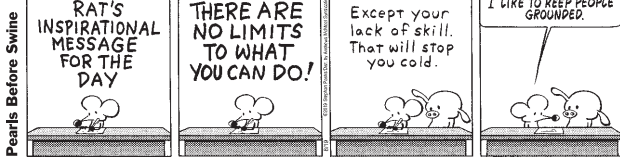
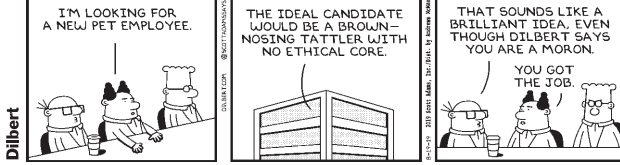
MONDAY IN EUROPE



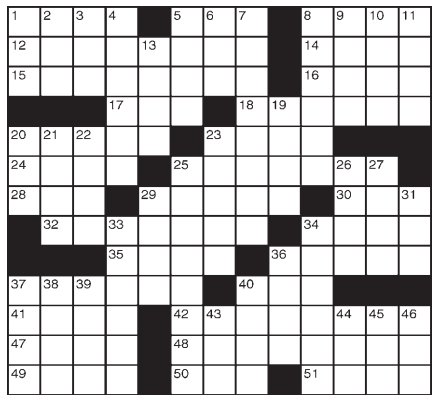
TUESDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



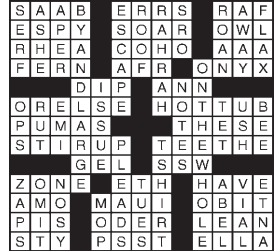
ACROSS

- 1 Taj Mahal city
- 5 Media mogul
- 8 Did the crawl
- 12 Chinese city
- 14 Carton sealer
- 15 Trendy types
- 16 "Born Free"
- lioness
- 17 Triumphed
- 18 Hauled (away)
- 20 Ceremonies
- 23 Dossier
- 24 "Believe — not!"
- 25 Angler's wear
- 28 TiVo precursor
- 29 Workshop array
- 30 Slapstick missile
- 32 Pelvis part
- 34 Penny
- 35 "May I — favor?"
- 36 Sill
- 37 Bacon pieces
- 40 Sushi fish
- 41 Persia, today
- 42 On-the-go beverage holder
- 47 Loony
- 48 Evenly matched
- 49 11 responders
- 50 Menlo Park monogram
- 51 Trudge

DOWN

- 1 Fireplace
- 5 residue
- 2 4, on a phone
- 3 Knock
- 4 Retort
- 5 Subsequently
- 6 Listener
- 7 Acolyte
- 8 Sound system
- 9 Mr. Disney
- 10 Church area
- 11 Hoover Dam lake
- 13 Classic Pontiacs
- 19 Priests' garments
- 20 Body of water
- (Abbr.)
- 21 Craving
- 22 Actress Spelling
- 23 "Shrek" princess
- 25 Basketball maneuver
- 26 Pundit's piece
- 27 Crystal-tapping sound
- 29 Recipe meas.
- 31 Tours season
- 33 Emulates Monet
- 34 Orchestral instruments
- 36 Departed
- 37 Faction
- 38 Streetcar
- 39 Huck's transport
- 40 Duel tool
- 43 — pickle
- 44 "You've got mail" co.
- 45 — Cat
- 46 Beer barrel

Answer to Previous Puzzle



8-19

CRYPTOQUIP

S N W R A Q R K O V W N W R J
V H T O R P T P T K V G E T A K K G R X W B
J P A W K I R J J K P T C J W - I R K O W B

K R P J S H R O K : Q N E P O K J H H X K .
Saturday's Cryptoquip: IF THE EIGHTEENTH GREEK LETTER HAD TO BE WORN AS A MARK OF SHAME, IT WOULD BE A SIGMA STIGMA.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals C


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- Free ads are available only DOD ID Card holders selling personal merchandise.
- Ads may contain up to 32 words. All Ads must contain price and contact information. No websites will be accepted in Free ads.
- Stars and Stripes reserves the right to re-classify, rewrite and reject any ads.

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Announcements 040

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Be aware of the common red flags.

Some of the latest Scam fads are:

- Vehicle buyers wanting to buy right unseen and have the vehicle shipped through an agent using paypal.
- People saying Free Dog (different breeds) for adoption.

Automotive 140

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Individuals placing classified advertising should use discretion in concluding the sale of their property. Not all potential buyers are reputable or honest. Stars and Stripes suggests that you take precautions to ensure that potential buyers are reputable and will be able to fulfill the terms of the sale. Stars and Stripes is not liable for the contractual relationship between sellers and buyers of merchandise advertised in the newspaper or on the web site.

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MLB

Roundup

Yankees, fired up by ejections, edge Indians

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Manager Aaron Boone, Brett Gardner and the New York Yankees again hammered away at the umpires, this time in prolonged rants that brought several members of the team spilling onto the field, while beating the Cleveland Indians 6-5 Saturday.

Gleyber Torres hit two home runs and Didi Gregorius and DJ LeMahieu also connected for the AL East-leading Yankees.

But what really fired up the crowd of 47,347 at Yankee Stadium occurred in the sixth inning after Cameron Maybin was called out on strikes by Triple-A ump Ben May.

For the third time in a month — each time with a minor league call-up umpire behind the plate — the team with the best record in American League lost its temper in a big way. This episode led to Boone, Gardner and pitcher CC Sabathia being ejected.

James Paxton (9-6) went five innings for the win. Zach Plesac (6-4) was chased in the fifth.

Aroldis Chapman closed for his 35th save in 40 chances.

Brewers 15, Nationals 14 (14): Eric Thames hit a two-run homer in the 14th inning and Milwaukee finally held on for a wild victory at Washington.

Christian Yelich hit two home runs, tying for the major league lead with 41, and the Brewers equaled their franchise record with seven. Thames' tiebreaking drive off Javy Guerra (1-1) was the last of them in a 5-hour, 40-minute marathon between National League playoff contenders that featured 38 hits, 17 pitching changes, 11 home runs and blown saves by both closers.

Yelich went 5-for-6 with four RBIs, breaking out of a 1-for-16 slump since returning from a back injury that cost him four games.

Cubs 2, Pirates 0: Kris Bryant homered in the seventh inning, and Chicago got out of

three bases-loaded jams to snap a four-game skid and win at Pittsburgh.

After committing an error at third base each of the previous two innings, Bryant drove the first pitch of the seventh from Steven Brault (3-2) into the left-field bleachers to put the Cubs ahead 1-0. It was Bryant's 25th homer this season and third in five games.

Reds 6, Cardinals 1: Aristides Aquino hit a three-run homer, Nick Senzel added a leadoff shot and host Cincinnati dropped St. Louis back into a tie with Chicago for first place in the NL Central.

Aquino's blast off Miles Mikolas (7-13) gave the Reds a 5-1 lead in the fifth. It was the rookie's 11th homer in his 17th career game.

Rays 1, Tigers 0 (13): Mike Brosseau's pinch-hit RBI single in the 13th inning drove in Eric Sogard and gave host Tampa Bay the win over Detroit.

Sogard doubled off Matt Hall (0-1) with two outs and Tommy Pham was intentionally walked. Brosseau singled to right-center field for the Rays' first run since Wednesday, ending a streak of 29 scoreless innings.

Mets 4, Royals 1: Jacob deGrom pitched seven sharp innings and Pete Alonso put New York ahead with a two-run single in its win at Kansas City.

Alonso got three hits and snapped a 1-all tie with two outs in the seventh when he rolled a bases-loaded grounder up the middle. Juan Lagares, who also had three hits, added an RBI triple in the eighth.

Athletics 8, Astros 4: Matt Chapman doubled among his three hits and Mark Canha had two hits and three RBIs to back Chris Bassitt's six solid innings, and host Oakland beat Houston.

Matt Olson and Josh Pegley each had two hits for the A's, who have won four straight games and 11 of their last 16.

Red Sox 4, Orioles 0: Eduardo Rodriguez pitched 7½ stellar innings, red-hot Rafael Devers



MARY ALTAFFER/AP

The New York Yankees' Gleyber Torres, left, celebrates hitting a home run with Phil Nevin during the Yankees' 6-5 defeat of the Cleveland Indians on Saturday.

belted a two-run homer and host Boston beat Baltimore for its fourth straight victory.

Trey Mancini had a double — his eighth straight game in Fenway Park with an extra-base hit — for the Orioles, who have dropped six straight.

Padres 5, Phillies 3: Dinelson Lamet pitched six solid innings, Ty France hit a tiebreaking single and visiting San Diego cooled off Philadelphia.

Lamet (2-2) allowed three runs and six hits with six strikeouts and a walk.

Mariners 4, Blue Jays 3: Kyle Seager hit a tiebreaking home run in the eighth inning, Austin Nola also went deep, and Seattle won at Toronto.

Seager's two-out drive off the right field foul screen came on the first pitch from left-hander Tim Lincecum (1-2).

Twins 12, Rangers 7: C.J. Cron homered in Minnesota's six-run first inning at win at Texas. Tyler Duffey (4-1) retired the last two batters in the fifth to leave the bases loaded. He got his second win of the day, because hours before the game he was awarded the victory from Friday night that originally was credited to teammate Sam Dyson.

Giants 11, Diamondbacks 6: Brandon Belt hit a grand slam and tied a career high with six RBIs, and Kevin Pillar had a career-best five hits to lead San Francisco to a win at Arizona.

Logan Webb (1-0) overcame a rocky start and pitched five innings to win his major league debut. The Giants won their third straight and sixth in seven games to continue their surge into serious National League wild-card contention.

Angels 6, White Sox 5: Mike Trout and Brian Gooden drove in two runs apiece, and host Los Angeles scored four in the seventh inning to rally past Chicago.

The Angels sent 10 batters to the plate in the seventh and scored off four White Sox pitchers. Trout lined a bases-loaded single to left field to knock in two runs, and Justin Upton tied it with a sharp grounder that went under the glove of third baseman Ryan Goolsby.

Rockies 11, Marlins 4: Ryan McMahon continued his power surge with two home runs to help host Colorado beat Miami for its first three-game winning streak in two months.

McMahon has homered in three straight games and four of his last five to set a career high with 17. He has four home runs on the current homestand.



JOHN BAZZOMORE/AP

Atlanta Braves center fielder Ronald Acuña Jr. dives to catch a fly ball by the Los Angeles Dodgers' Corey Seager with the bases loaded for the final out in the second inning in the Braves' 4-3 win.

Braves power way past Dodgers

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Josh Donaldson and Adam Duvall hit consecutive homers off Hyun-Jin Ryu in the sixth inning, the faulty Atlanta bullpen redeemed itself for a change, and the Braves beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 4-3 on Saturday night.

Donaldson stirred the largest crowd in SunTrust Park's three-year history when his 29th homer landed in the Atlanta bullpen in right-center. Duvall added on by going deep into the left-center seats to make it 4-2.

Atlanta won the matchup of NL division leaders one night after the Dodgers' powerful offense homered four times, sending the Braves to a 27th loss in the last 37 regular-season games between the teams. With their first win in five meetings this season, the Braves are trying to stand up to the club that eliminated them from the playoffs last year. Ryu (12-3) lost for the first time in seven starts as his ERA, still best in the major leagues, rose

19 points to 1.64. Sean Newcomb (6-3) turned in a promising performance after allowing consecutive homers the night before that left him with a 13.49 ERA in his last eight outings. He bailed out starter Mike Foltynewicz in the fifth, getting Edwin Rios to fly out with runners at the corners.

Newcomb faced the minimum in 1½ innings. Luke Jackson, who lost the closer's job last month, allowed Max Muncy's 31st homer before stranding a runner he walked in the seventh. Shane Greene, another former closer, struck out the side in the eighth. Mark Melancon earned his second save in two chances when Cody Bellinger popped up with a runner at first to end it.

Atlanta's bullpen has been battered over the last two weeks with Greene, Melancon and Chris Martin — all acquired at the trade deadline to steady the relief corps — beginning the game with a combined 10.47 ERA in seven appearances apiece.

NEW YORK SCOREBOARD

American League

| | East Division | West Division |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| New York | 83 | 42 |
| Texas | 71 | 58 |
| Boston | 66 | 59 |
| Baltimore | 52 | 74 |
| Chicago | 41 | 73 |

| | | |
|-------------|-----|-----|
| Minnesota | 610 | — |
| Cleveland | 73 | 51 |
| St. Louis | 45 | 191 |
| Kansas City | 44 | 79 |
| Detroit | 38 | 306 |

| | | |
|--------------|----|----|
| Houston | 78 | 46 |
| Oakland | 71 | 58 |
| Los Angeles | 61 | 64 |
| Philadelphia | 59 | 73 |
| Seattle | 51 | 73 |

National League

| | East Division | West Division |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Atlanta | 66 | 56 |
| Washington | 66 | 56 |
| Philadelphia | 66 | 56 |
| New York | 66 | 56 |
| St. Louis | 66 | 56 |

| | | |
|---------------|----|----|
| Chicago | 65 | 52 |
| Cincinnati | 65 | 52 |
| Pittsburgh | 65 | 52 |
| Los Angeles | 65 | 52 |
| San Francisco | 65 | 52 |
| San Diego | 65 | 52 |
| Colorado | 65 | 52 |

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| Toronto | 2 | 7 |
| Baltimore | 2 | 7 |
| Oakland | 2 | 7 |
| Los Angeles | 2 | 7 |
| San Francisco | 2 | 7 |
| San Diego | 2 | 7 |
| Colorado | 2 | 7 |

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| Los Angeles | 65 | — |
| San Francisco | 61 | 50 |
| San Diego | 57 | 67 |
| Colorado | 56 | 67 |

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| San Diego | 57 | 67 |
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| Los Angeles | 65 | — |
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Brewers 15, Nationals 14 (14)

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| Chicago | 65 | 52 |
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Rockies 11, Marlins 4

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| Philadelphia | 71 | 58 |
| Baltimore | 66 | 59 |
| Chicago | 52 | 74 |
| St. Louis | 41 | 73 |

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| Minnesota | 610 | — |
| Cleveland | 73 | 51 |
| St. Louis | 45 | 191 |
| Kansas City | 44 | 79 |
| Detroit | 38 | 306 |

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| Houston | 78 | 46 |
| Oakland | 71 | 58 |
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| Philadelphia | 59 | 73 |
| Seattle | 51 | 73 |

National League

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| New York | 66 | 56 |
| St. Louis | 66 | 56 |

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LITTLE LEAGUE WORLD SERIES/OLYMPICS

Small island with MLB ties, Curacao looking strong

By DAVID ECKERT
Associated Press

SOUTH WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. — Jurdick Profar was just looking for a challenge.

He hadn't received much of one from an overmatched Australian team, which trailed Jurdick's group from Curacao, 10-0, in the third inning Thursday in the Little League World Series' opening game.

So Jurdick found a way to test himself.

Standing on third base as the Australian pitcher held the ball in his glove, Jurdick broke for the plate. He was there before the Australians could even make a throw, sliding in for the final run of an 11-0 blowout.

"I asked the manager, and he laughed," Jurdick said with a big smile. "Neither the pitcher or the catcher looked, so I went for it."

Just about everything that Curacao tried worked out against Australia. Shendron Martinus threw a no-hitter, walking just one better over the course of a four-inning game shortened by Little League's mercy rule.

The victors notched 10 hits, and Curley Martha punctuated the rout with a two-run homer.

It was just the latest example of a thriving baseball culture on Curacao, a 171-square-mile island not far from Venezuela's coast.

The island has produced stars

such as Atlanta Braves second baseman Ozzie Albies, Los Angeles Dodgers reliever Kenley Jansen and Jurdick's big brother, Jurickson. They're among the 11 current and former big leaguers born in the town of Willemstad, the same place these little leaguers call home.

This is Pabao Little League's ninth trip to the Little League World Series, and the 13th time a team from Curacao has been represented.

Not had for an island with a population of 162,000.

Pabao outlasted Caribbean powerhouses Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic — along with new Little League country Cuba — to get here.

In fact, its greatest threat came from another Curacao Little League team. Pabao bested Pariba in the Caribbean Regional championship game, 8-3. Together, the two Curacao teams went 11-0 against the competition.

That kind of Little League dominance has been reinforced by big league success.

Players including Andruw Jones, Andrelin Simmons and Jonathan Schoop have provided examples for kids on the island, showing them where baseball can take them if they put in the work.

"The kids are very interested to see the play, and have the urge to play baseball," Curacao manager Michelangelo Celestina



TOM E. PUSKAS/AP

Curacao's Jurdick Profar delivers a pitch against South Korea in the first inning on Sunday at the Little League World Series.

said, adding that they derive a bit of satisfaction from beating larger countries.

Jurdick Profar is the charisma and the muscle behind this Curacao team.

He's charming, enthusiastic and speaks English well.

At 5-foot-9, 148 pounds, Jurdick, who started at catcher in Curacao's first game, has one of the most powerful frames in the tournament. Jurdick threw the first three innings in his team's 4-0 loss Sunday to Little League power South Korea.

Jurdick also benefits from his bloodline. Two of his older brothers, Jurickson and Juremi, made stops at the Little League World Series on their way to professional baseball careers.

Jurickson won an LLWS title for Curacao in 2004, and then made a return trip in 2005, when his team lost to Hawaii in the title game. He now plays second base for the Oakland Athletics.

Juremi, who plays in the Texas

Rangers organization, played for Curacao in 2007 and 2008 in South Williamsport.

Jurdick speaks with them almost every day.

Asked if he had received any advice from his brothers, Jurdick said they kept it simple.

"Just keep your eye on the ball, never take your eye off it, and just have fun," he said.

Heartwarming moment

Diagnosed with leukemia, Jenn Bloom was cleared to travel to watch the Minnesota team that includes her son, Dylan, and is coached by her husband, Greg. During a live interview with ESPN, Dylan scored the first run of a game between Minnesota and Kentucky, causing Jenn to become emotional as she discussed her son's success, her journey and Greg's parenting help. "This is why we do this," she said. Minnesota went on to win, 2-1.

Olympics

Swimming part of test triathlon canceled

By STEPHEN WADE
Associated Press

TOKYO — High levels of bacteria forced the swimming portion of a triathlon test event for the Tokyo Paralympics to be canceled on Saturday.

It's the second setback in the triathlon for organizers of next year's Olympics and Paralympics. An Olympic triathlon running event was shortened from 10 kilometers to 5 kilometers on Thursday because of what the International Triathlon Union called "extreme levels" of heat.

Tokyo's hot and humid summers are a major worry for Olympic organizers. The water issues are a reminder of the Rio de Janeiro Olympics three years ago when high bacteria and virus levels were found in waters for sailing, rowing and open-water swimming.

In a statement, the ITU said E-coli levels were "more than two above the ITU limits." It said the water was at Level 4, the highest risk level.

E-coli bacteria, which normally live in the intestines of animals and people, can produce intestinal pain, diarrhea and a fever.

The venue in Tokyo Bay, called Odaiba, has been a concern for organizers, who have experimented with different measures to clean the water in the area, located in an urban part of central Tokyo.

The ITU is scheduled to hold its final test event on Sunday "depending on the latest water quality tests," it said in a statement.

A few days ago the ITU described water quality conditions at the venue as "very good." However, swimmers at a recent distance swimming event at the same venue complained of foul smelling water.

The water temperature at the venue on Saturday was 84 farhenheit, with the air temperature hovering above 90F.

Tokyo spokesman Masa Takaya said "we are set to conduct a comprehensive review with the international federation."

He said a triple-layer underwater screen will be installed for next year's Olympics, replacing a single-layer.

"Based on the results of multiple research in the past, we believe that the multiple layer screen will assure the successful delivery of the competitions," he said.

Filthy water plagued the Rio de Janeiro Olympics. The South American city lacks a functioning sanitation system for much of its population. Open water there tested high for bacteria and viruses, which worried athletes in rowing, sailing and triathlon.

Dreams: Country struggling to showcase emerging talent

FROM BACK PAGE

"My dream came true," said Diego Gutierrez, a 10-year-old on the Cacique Mara team that won the junior Latin America title this month. He spoke to The Associated Press by telephone from Maracaibo, a Venezuelan city hit hard by power cuts, gasoline scarcity and other problems.

The team's victory was a bright spot for a country more accustomed to news about political conflict and economic turmoil.

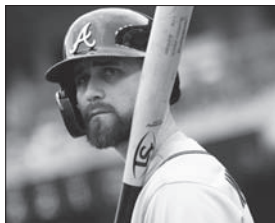
The 14 players barely made it to the tournament because they didn't have money to buy plane tickets. Daniel Gutierrez, Diego's father and head of the junior team, took the boys and some family members anyway on a 10-hour bus journey to Caracas in late July in hopes of securing financial support.

Red Sox pitcher Eduardo Rodriguez got involved with little time to spare, buying tickets after learning about the team's plight.

"I saw it on Instagram and sent them a text and asked, 'How can I help you guys to make the dream come true for the kids?'" Rodriguez told AP.

"I know how it is," he said. "When I was a kid, I had a lot of invitations to play in some competitions, but I didn't have the money to go there so I know how it feels, so that's why I did it."

Another Venezuelan major leaguer, Jhoulys



PATRICK SEMANSKY/AP

The Braves' Ender Inciarte and Rounoud Odor of the Texas Rangers donated funds to help pay for the Venezuela team to travel to the Little League Baseball World Series.

Chacin of the Milwaukee Brewers, also donated money for the trip. Venezuela's sports ministry and the Panamanian airline Copa then gave support.

Boys run hard, lift weights, bat and pitch in the heat on the baseball field at the Petare slum in Caracas. But strains are evident.

"It's sad to see that the number of boys attending has dropped a lot," said trainer Nelson Castro, who has coached for decades

and shaped future stars, including Armando Galarraga.

Another coach, Pedro Quero, said players used to eat well, providing a strong base for them to hone their talents. It's different now.

"We're seeing a lot of food that doesn't help with the boys' nutrition," Quero said. "The kids aren't growing well."

Poor nutrition has forced Venezuelan baseball academies with limited resources to try to provide better food, including protein, to make up for diet deficiencies, he said.

Jose Escobar, a Caracas resident, watched as his 3-year-old son ran around cones during a speed and stamina exercise at the baseball field. Escobar said another son, 18-year-old Anthony, signed with the Minnesota Twins two years ago, just before Venezuela's humanitarian crisis got much worse.

The older son's good fortune "was a blessing because, the way things are in the country, you can't even give your child a good education," Escobar said.

Diego Gutierrez, the young player who was on the winning team in Mexico, started playing baseball when he was 3, helped by his father. His new dream is to play for a major league team in the United States.

Right now, the 10-year-old is bursting with gratitude toward Rodriguez of the Red Sox for helping his team.

"Now he knows us," the boy said.

BASKETBALL/MMA



MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP

United States guard Kemba Walker, left, talks to coach Gregg Popovich during the first half of the team's exhibition basketball game against Spain on Friday in Anaheim, Calif.

On basketball

Popovich faces tough choice in his final cut for World Cup

By TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — When Gregg Popovich was cut from the 1972 U.S. Olympic basketball roster, those making the decision took the easiest way out. They passed a note.

"Clueless people," Popovich said, 47 years later, grinning to try to suggest it doesn't still bother him.

It'll soon be time for Popovich to walk in those same decision-making shoes, when he has to pare USA Basketball's roster from 13 players to 12 in time for the FIBA World Cup this month.

All 13 remaining hopefuls were on the team plane Saturday to Australia. So when the last cut gets made — expect it about Aug. 27, unless injuries happen — a guy will see his gold-medal hopes come to a quick end.

And no, Popovich is not looking forward to this. "When you cut people from your regular NBA team, it's difficult," said Popovich, USA Basketball's men's national coach. "We're going to have to do that. And it's going to be even more so. I'm dreading having to do that. But it's got to get done."

There have been more than 50 NBA players linked to this World Cup team at some point in the last year or so, most of them dropping out of consideration on their own, citing schedule demands or concerns.

A few others were eliminated after injuries. Only two to this point — Miami's Bam Adebayo and Chicago's Thaddeus Young — were actually cut, those moves coming after the first week of training camp in Las Vegas. It would have been 14 players going to Australia, but Sacramento's De'Aaron Fox decided Saturday to leave the team.

So there's one cut left. "It just means that guys are doing their jobs," Milwaukee's Kris Middleton said. "We're making it as tough as it can be on them. I think guys have been great all camp, just being positive, bringing energy and playing as hard as they can, giving their body up for everybody else. So that's a huge thing for everybody."

It would seem like there are a handful of locks to make the team: Kemba Walker, Donovan Mitchell, Harrison Barnes, Mason Plumlee, Myles Turner and Middleton. They were starters Friday night against Spain — Plumlee started the first half, Turner the second, with the U.S. still mixing and matching.

Jayson Tatum played more minutes than nearly

‘We’re making (the final cut) as tough as we can on them.’

Khris Middleton
Milwaukee Bucks small forward

everyone Friday. Joe Harris — the NBA's best three-point shooter last season — should be on this team based on the importance of shooting from deep in the international game. Brook Lopez should make the team for the same reason since his 7-foot frame and three-point game seem made for the FIBA stage.

That's nine, or four guys left for three spots. Marcus Smart is a bit of a wild card — unable to play in either the Spain game or the intrasquad scrimmage Aug. 9 because of a calf issue, though that he's still on the roster strongly suggests the U.S. has him in its plans. Assuming he's healthy now, pencil him into a spot. (If he's not healthy, that makes the decision obvious and simple.) Jaylen Brown brings toughness, and he's played well enough to merit a uniform as well.

That, if the U.S. is keeping Smart, makes it 11 players.

That would mean two guys remain for one spot. Arguments for both can be made. Kyle Kuzma played very well against Spain on Friday night and teammates have raved about his effort in camp. Derrick White was a select-teamer before getting called up, and plays for Popovich in San Antonio. It certainly would make sense to have someone in the team room fluent in Popovich's hows and whys.

If nothing else, Popovich won't be sending the unlucky-to-be-cut guy a note.

The easiest thing he could have done after the Spain game is tap those who didn't make it on the shoulder, deliver a fond adieu and offer well-wishes for NBA training camp next month.

Instead, he'll bring 13 guys to the other side of the world, spend another 10 days or so squeezing every bit of effort out of them, teach them some more about basketball and wine, and then decide which one to send home.

Sounds like how he wishes he was treated in 1972. Asked why he didn't pick the final roster before Australia, Popovich was succinct.

"It seemed like the right thing to do," he said.

Miocic takes out Cormier, reclaims belt at UFC 241

By GREG BEACHAM
Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Stipe Miocic waited over a year to face Daniel Cormier again, and his plan for the rematch didn't start to work until they were deep in the fourth round.

That's when the patient, determined firefighter from Cleveland finally got his revenge — and suddenly reclaimed his UFC heavyweight title.

Miocic stopped Cormier with a barrage of punches in the fourth, taking back his championship belt with a comeback victory at UFC 241 on Saturday night.

Miocic (19-3) lost the first two rounds on every judge's scorecard in his rematch with the 40-year-old Cormier (22-2). After making some progress in the third, Miocic steadily came forward through Cormier's blows in the fourth and finally hurt the champion with a punch to the body.

Miocic then landed several powerhouse right hands to Cormier's head, buckling his knees and eventually forcing referee Herb Dean to stop the fight with 15 seconds left in the fourth round. The 6-foot-5 behemoth leaped onto the wall of the cage and celebrated with fans still stunned by the fight's sudden turn.

"I saw some weakness in that third round," Miocic said. "And then in that fourth round, I caught him with that right hand. Thank God, because he's tough."

Nate Diaz also returned from a three-year hiatus with a dominant decision over Anthony Pettis at Honda Center, but he was upstaged by the remarkable redemption of Miocic.

Miocic reigned as the UFC's heavyweight champion for 26 months, and he defended his belt a UFC-record three consecutive times before Cormier dethroned him in July 2018 with a first-round stoppage victory. Despite Cormier's decisive victory, Miocic campaigned for a rematch and eventually received it when Cormier said he "deserved it."

Cormier's quick hands were the difference early in the rematch. The 5-foot-11 Cormier also picked up his much larger opponent and slammed him onto the canvas during the first round, showing off the elite athleticism lurking in his dad's blood.

"He got hit with everything but the kitchen sink, and he managed to stay in the fight," UFC President Dana White said of Miocic.

Miocic landed plenty of shots, but Cormier's blows were more frequent and more impactful — although not much makes an impact on the hulking Miocic. The fight turned quickly and de-

‘Maybe (I) tried to rest and recover for the fifth round, because he wasn't going anywhere. I don't know what the reasoning was, but it was a mistake.’

Daniel Cormier

On his heavyweight loss at UFC 241

cisively when Miocic finally hurt Cormier, who couldn't recover.

"I took the pressure off a little bit," Cormier said. "I don't know why. Maybe (I) tried to rest and recover for the fifth round, because he wasn't going anywhere. I don't know what the reasoning was, but it was a mistake."

Cormier didn't announce his retirement in the cage afterward, but the former two-belt champion planned to think seriously about quitting MMA after this fight, no matter its outcome. The former Olympic-level wrestler had always planned to get out of the sport before he turned 40, but Cormier pushed his deadline by five months after surgery prevented him from fighting last March.

"A lot of times you base decisions on emotion, and I don't want to be that guy," Cormier said. "I'm going to go back and talk to (my wife) Salina, talk to my coaches and figure out what's next. ... Losing any type of fight for me is terrible, but getting stopped is just insane. That's twice I've been stopped. That's not good. I'm smart enough to understand that."

White won't rush Cormier for a decision.

"I don't want to see him leave," White said. "I still think he's one of the absolute best in the world. Stipe is just one of the best heavyweights ever."

Right before Miocic's win, the 34-year-old Diaz (20-11) cemented his wild popularity with an impressive performance in his first fight since he split a pair of bouts with Conor McGregor in 2016.

Diaz punished Pettis (22-9) in standup striking and on the ground, winning 30-27 on two judges' scorecards and 29-28 on the third. Fighting through a serious cut near his eye, Diaz repeatedly hurt the former lightweight champion and nearly got a finish several times in the third.

"I wasn't sure if there would be some rust or not, so I just treated it like there might be," Diaz said.

AUTO RACING/GOLF

Hamlin wins at Bristol

Late-race pass denies DiBenedetto's upset bid

By JENNA FRYER
Associated Press

BRISTOL, Tenn. — The winner climbed from his car and immediately apologized for denying an underdog his first career victory. The runner-up, in tears over his near miss, was raucously embraced by the crowd for his oh-so-close effort.

Bristol Motor Speedway was a bizarre mix of emotions Saturday night as Denny Hamlin chased down Matt DiBenedetto to spoil a Saturday night upset. DiBenedetto learned this week that Levine Family Racing won't bring him back for a second season, and he has no job lined up for 2020.

"I'm so sorry to Matt DiBenedetto, (crew chief) Mike Wheeler. I hate it. I know what a win would mean to that team," Hamlin said as soon as he exited his car. "But I've got to give 110 percent."

Hamlin was the first Toyota and Joe Gibbs Racing driver to start from the pole this season but his race was a roller coaster that began when his car was damaged when he bounced off of Jimmie Johnson. He later had a loose wheel, fell down a lap and seemed out of contention for his second career victory at Bristol.

At the same time, DiBenedetto was working his way toward the front and put his Toyota out front for a race-high 93 laps. He needed redemption — and a win would have put him in the playoffs, no less — but he again wound up victim to the Gibbs juggernaut. Gibbs has a logjam of talent, Levine is a Gibbs partner, and Gibbs needs DiBenedetto's seat next year to promote Christopher Bell from the Xfinity Series.

"I wanted it to bad," DiBenedetto said. "I'm sad. Congrats to Denny, raced hard and I've been a fan of his since I was a kid. To be racing door-to-door with him at Bristol in front of a great group of fans — I'm trying not to get emotional but it's been a tough week and I just want to stick around and want to keep doing this for a long time to come. I am not done yet. Something is going to happen."

The crowd roared its support as DiBenedetto's interview was broadcast on the infield big screen.

Roughly 45 minutes later, DiBenedetto found Hamlin on the NBC Sports set and interrupted his interview. The two hugged, and Hamlin pulled DiBenedetto close and whispered into his ear for a long moment.

He remained apologetic for spoiling what would have been a defining moment for DiBenedetto, as well as Wheeler, Hamlin's former crew chief.

"It is the worst person possible to have to pass with eight to go. My history with Mike Wheeler ... Matt is a fantastic driver," Hamlin said. "I have no doubt he's going to land on his feet, something better, and if he doesn't, all you car owners are idiots. Someone with that much talent deserves to be racing for wins on a regular basis."

Hamlin and DiBenedetto raced side by side for several laps before Hamlin completed the decisive late pass and sealed his fourth victory of the season.

DiBenedetto was a career-best second.

Hamlin got over his initial disappointment for DiBenedetto and praised his No. 11 team for its resilient race and the way he picked his way through traffic to reclaim the lead.

"Between my spotter and the crew chief, just stayed on me to not get anxious, just kind of take my time. I had plenty of time," Hamlin said. "I just worked him over, worked him over. I knew I didn't want to show him the bottom (lane) until I knew I could make the pass. I ran the top, ran the top, ran the top, got the position on the bottom and finished it."

"We had a great car that could move around. Came back from a couple laps down and here we are."

DiBenedetto's fight to hang on to the victory was hampered when he encountered Ryan Newman, a driver trying to make the playoffs. Newman refused to give an inch as DiBenedetto tried to put him down a lap, and contact between the two cars caused DiBenedetto's Toyota to tighten up as Hamlin closed the gap.

A DiBenedetto victory would have dramatically changed the playoff picture. There are two races remaining to set the 16-driver field and only nine drivers have locked in their spots. With seven open, a first-time winner would have grabbed a coveted spot.

Johnson has never missed the playoffs since the format began in 2004 but the seven-time champion dropped to 18th in points after a disappointing start at Bristol. Clint Bowyer also dropped out of the top-16, but is only two points behind the final spot, now held by teammate Daniel Suarez.



NAM Y. HUN/AP

Justin Thomas celebrates after making a birdie on the 14th hole during the third round of the BMW Championship at Medinah Country Club, on Saturday.

Thomas crushes Medinah with 61, takes 6-shot lead

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

MEDINAH, Ill. — Justin Thomas opened with five straight birdies, added a pair of eagles and shattered the course record at soft, vulnerable Medinah with an 11-under 61 to take a six-shot lead into the final round of the BMW Championship.

Thomas hit 5-wood to 2 feet for an eagle on No. 10, holed out from 180 yards with an 8-iron on No. 16 and made eight birdies to turn a tight race into a one-man show.

"I felt good about my game for a while, and you don't know when something like this is going to happen," Thomas said. "We've all been talking the last couple of weeks that I'm due to have one, and it's nice when it happens."

And just like that, he was already thinking about Sunday.

Thomas was at 21-under 195, six shots clear of Tony Finau (68) and Patrick Cantlay (67). He has a clear path to his first victory in a year, and it would give him the FedEx Cup lead going into the Tour Championship at East Lake.

The goal for Tiger Woods is simply to get to the Tour Championship, where last year he ended five years without winning. Woods had a bogey-free 67, his lowest score since the final round of the Memorial.

When Medinah is this much of a pushover, it didn't help all that much. He was tied for 31st, with some 18 players ahead of where he needs to be to move into the top 30 in the FedEx Cup and advance to East Lake.

"I shoot 60, it should be all right," Woods said, a tongue-in-cheek comment made about the time Thomas was teeing off.

Thomas had a pair of 12-foot birdie putts, hit to 2 feet on No. 3, holed a 15-footer on No. 4 and was out of position only briefly before a fifth straight birdie on the par-5 fifth. But it was the back nine where Thomas seized control.

First, he drilled a 5-wood that rolled out to 2 feet below the cup. Ordinarily, that might have been his best shot of the day. For this round, it didn't rate among the top three. He chipped in for birdie from a fluffy lie behind the 14th green. Understated was his pitch to the 15th after driving into the water to save par.

And then, the fireworks on a cloudy, dreary afternoon that featured a rain stoppage of just more than an hour.

From 180 yards, he cut an 8-iron that looked all the way, landed short of the hole and rolled in. Thomas smiled and mentioned, "Brooks Koepka's money," to caddy Jimmy Johnson, referring to a wager Thomas has with Koepka on holing shots from over 50 yards (\$1,000) and a hole-in-one (\$5,000). That put Thomas up \$7,000.

With adrenaline running high, he hit 9-iron from a forward tee and a front pin over the water to 6 feet for his last birdie.

Finau holed out from the fourth fairway for eagle. Cantlay had five birdies.

Low scores were everywhere. Medinah never looked more vulnerable.

"It doesn't matter what golf course it is," Thomas said. "You give us soft, good greens and soft fairways, we're going to tear it apart. It's just how it is."

All but two players in the 69-man field — Harold Varner III and Cameron Champ — were at par or better.



WADE PAYNE/AP

Denny Hamlin, center, celebrates after winning a NASCAR Cup Series race on Saturday in Bristol, Tenn.

NFL

Preseason roundup

Prescott, Pollard sharp in Cowboys' win

Associated Press

HONOLULU — Dak Prescott appears ready for the regular season, with or without Ezekiel Elliott.

The Dallas quarterback completed all five of his pass attempts in his only series, and the Cowboys came away with a 14-10 victory over the Los Angeles Rams on Saturday night.

Prescott dropped back to pass seven times, completed passes to five different receivers, had one short completion negated by an ineligible lineman downfield penalty and was sacked once.

Prescott's only drive covered 97 yards in 12 plays, took more than six minutes and culminated with Tony Pollard's 14-yard touchdown run.

"It's always a challenge coming off your own goal line. We call that a 'coming out situation.' One of your goals is to get a first down and change field position. To be able to have a 13-play drive and cash it in for points was big for us," Cowboys coach Jason Garrett said.

Through his first two preseason games, Prescott has completed all nine of his pass attempts.

"It is a small sample size and we're not going crazy about him being 9-for-9, but what he's done well though is play well. He's played well in practice, he's played well in preseason games, he's handled himself well, he's making good decisions, making good throws and that follows with how he prepares," Garrett said.

Pollard, who started in place of Elliott, finished with five rushes for 42 yards. Elliott, after a two-time league rushing champion, missed his second preseason game while he continues his holdout.

Patriots 22, Titans 22: Jarrett Stidham threw a 23-yard touchdown pass to Damoun Patterson with 4:12 left, rallying the New England Patriots over the host Tennessee Titans.

Stidham picked up where he



MARCO GARCIA/AP

Dallas Cowboys running back Tony Pollard (36) ran in two touchdowns Saturday in a 14-10 preseason defeat of the Los Angeles Rams in Honolulu.

left off in his previous trip to Nashville's Nissan Stadium. Stidham had five TD passes here helping Auburn rout Purdue in the Music City Bowl last December, and this time the rookie was 14-for-19 for 193 yards helping the Patriots (2-0) come back from a 17-8 halftime deficit.

Two days of practices against the Titans was enough for Patriots coach Bill Belichick to let Tom Brady watch a second straight preseason game with New England's options at wide receiver thin because of injuries.

Marcus Mariota started for the Titans (1-1) and shook off a pair of three-and-outs before his best drive this preseason. He capped

a 10-play, 87-yard drive with an 11-yard TD pass to his favorite target, three-time Pro Bowl tight end Delanie Walker, who broke his right ankle in the 2018 season opener.

Texans 30, Lions 23: Deshaun Watson looked sharp in directing a 75-yard drive, capped by a 4-yard touchdown pass to DeAndre Hopkins to help host Houston over Detroit.

Watson, who sat out in a loss to Green Bay last week, was 5-for-7 for 60 yards and scrambled once for 7 yards. After being sacked an NFL-high 62 times last season, the third-year player had plenty of time to throw while facing a Lions defense which opened the game

with the bulk of its starters.

Hopkins, like Watson, making his preseason debut, had two receptions for 17 yards and shook off Detroit's Quandre Diggs to get open and make the TD catch that put Houston up 7-0. Hopkins, who had a career-high 1,572 yards receiving last season, was the only one of Houston's top receivers to play. Will Fuller, who is healthy after tearing a knee ligament last season, sat out and the Texans were without Keke Coutee, who injured his ankle last week.

Steelers 17, Chiefs 7: Mason Rudolph guided a long first-half touchdown drive to perhaps nudge ahead of Josh Dobbs in the race to be the backup behind Ben

Roethlisberger and host Pittsburgh beat Kansas City.

Rudolph finished 10-for-15 for 77 yards while Dobbs completed 6-for-11 for 95 yards with a red-zone interception on a night the Steelers (2-0) opted to keep several key starters on the sideline, from quarterback Roethlisberger to Pro Bowl offensive linemen David DeCastro and Maurkice Pouncey to rookie linebacker Devin Bush.

Patrick Mahomes, the reigning NFL MVP — who directed a touchdown in his lone drive in Kansas City's preseason opener last week — did little during two series of work following a thunderstorm that forced the opening kickoff to be pushed back nearly an hour.

Mahomes completed just 2 of 5 passes for 11 yards, a far cry from his previous visit to Heinz Field, when he threw for six touchdowns in a Week 2 win last September that served as a harbinger of the season to come.

Browns 21, Colts 18: Garrett Gilbert threw two touchdown passes in the first half and David Blough added another TD pass in the second half, leading Cleveland to a win at Indianapolis.

Cleveland (2-0) had won nine of its past 10 preseason games — this one with its top two quarterbacks sitting out and Kareem Hunt returned to the field for the first time in nearly nine months.

Quarterback Chad Kelly did everything he could to keep the Colts' winning streak intact.

After Blough gave Cleveland a 21-7 lead early in the third quarter with a 4-yard TD pass to Derrick Williams, Kelly tried to rally the Colts.

Gilbert played the entire first half and was 13 of 19 with 151 yards. Blough played the entire second half and was 7 of 12 with 74 yards.

Kelly wound up 12-for-17 with 115 yards for Indy (0-2).

Manning insurance: Jones has been solid

By TOM CANAVAN

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — For the first time in about a decade, the New York Giants seemingly don't have to worry about Eli Manning getting hurt.

In just two preseason games, first-round draft pick and heir apparent Daniel Jones has shown he can play in the NFL.

Jones is 16 of 19 for 228 yards and two touchdowns. He's completed 84.2% of his passes with a 151.8 quarterback rating.

No one ever would have felt the same about former backups Geno Smith, Alex Tanney, Davis Webb, Josh Johnson, Ryan Nassib or Kyle Lauletta in recent years.

Giants co-owner John Mara

said recently he would love to see Manning remain the starter all season and for Jones not to play. Coach Pat Shurmur seconded that approach after New York won its second straight game.

So far, there is no need to make the move. Manning has looked good playing just two series. He had a three-and-out against the Jets and hit all four of his passes in engineering a first-drive touchdown against the Bears. He is 5-for-5 for 42 yards and a TD. His quarterback rating is 143.8.

On Saturday, in discussing the Giants' 32-13 win over Chicago on Friday night, Shurmur refused to say if Jones was ready.

"I think when his time comes, he's going to be ready," Shurmur said. "I still think we've got train-

ing camp left to push through, we've got preseason games left to push through. I would say right now, we're three weeks from any of us being ready, so that's sort of where we're at."

Jones wasn't perfect against the Bears. He lost two fumbles. The first came when he and center Jon Halapala failed to get together on a snap in the red zone. The second came after he was sacked, the result on not keeping two hands on the ball.

"You don't want to make any mistakes, but I think it was going to happen and you realize that," Jones said. "There are going to be some mistakes and just figuring that out sometimes. I didn't try to make any mistakes."



ADAM HUNGER/AP

New York Giants wide receiver Daniel Jones (8) celebrates a touchdown against the Chicago Bears during the Giants' 32-13 preseason win Friday. In two preseason games, Jones is 16 of 19 for 228 yards and two touchdowns.

SPORTS

Leader of the pack

Denny Hamlin wins at Bristol to spoil DiBenedetto's upset bid » Page 30



Venezuela's Deivis Ordóñez dances in front of the camera as he celebrates scoring a run against Australia at the Little League World Series tournament in South Williamsport, Pa., on Saturday. Venezuela won 2-0.

TOM E. PUSKAS/AP

Big dreams

Venezuelan players' chances of making it to the pros getting smaller as MLB closes academies

By FABIOLA SANCHEZ
Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela — More than 100 boys train daily on a baseball field next to the biggest slum in Caracas, using old bats, balls and gloves in hopes of achieving the ultimate goal: a professional baseball career in the United States and an escape from Venezuela's hardship.

Chances are small, and getting remoter. Major League Baseball's teams have shut down their academies in Venezuela and no longer send scouts. Sometimes, local trainers say, a player faints on the field because he hasn't had enough to eat, a sign of how nationwide shortages of food, medicine and

other necessities inflict a heavy toll.

A junior team from Maracaibo is participating this week in the Little League World Series in Williamsport, Pa. Two Venezuelan pro players, Rouned Odor of the Texas Rangers and Ender Inciarte of the Atlanta Braves, donated funds for the trip.

Still, there is a precedent for youthful ambitions. Venezuela was an incubator of major league stars such as Miguel Cabrera and Felix Hernandez, and the flair is still there. Another young Venezuelan team arrived two hours before their first game at a tournament in Mexico and ended up winning the whole contest.

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GENE J. PUSKAS/AP

The Latin America Region Champion Little League team from Maracaibo, Venezuela, participates in the opening ceremony of the 2019 Little League World Series tournament on Thursday.

Miocic rallies to reclaim heavyweight belt at UFC 241 » MMA, Page 29